

1 **STATE OF RHODE ISLAND AND PROVIDENCE**
PLANTATIONS

2

PROCEEDINGS AT:

3

School Committee

4

Town of Cumberland

5

IN RE: School Committee Hearing/Special Program

6

Subcommittee Meeting

7

DATE: October 26, 2010

8

TIME: 7:00 P.M.

PLACE: Cumberland High School

9

Mendon Road

Cumberland, RI

10

11 **SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERS:**

12 Jeff Mutter
Lisa Beaulieu
13 Daniel Pedro

14

15

16 APPEARANCES:

17 Marge Clarke/NESDEC
Donald Kennedy/NESDEC
18 John Kennedy/NESDEC

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1 (HEARING COMMENCED AT 7:00 P.M.)

2 MR. MUTTER: I'd like to welcome everyone to

3 the public school committee special program
subcommittee

4 meeting of Tuesday, October 26, 2010. I call the meeting

5 to order at 7:01.

6 Although it is not on the docket I would ask you to

7 rise for the Pledge of Allegiance.

8 **(PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE)**

9 **MR. MUTTER: I'm just going to take a few**

10 **minutes to go over how we had arrived at this point this**

11 **evening. In February during the budget cycle there was**

12 **an elementary school design proposal that was**
presented

13 **in April 29th, early May, that the committee chair refer**

14 **the proposal to the Special Programs Committee, which**
is

15 **where it is right now. The legal motion at that time was**

16 **to defer implementation until September 2011. So this**

17 **procedure, if nothing happened, this original proposal**

18 **would take effect in September 2011.**

19 **The first meeting of the Special Programs Committee**

20 was June 2, 2010 at Ashton, and with the help of the
21 administration and the employee's participation that
22 night there was an RFP request for the proposal that was
23 approved, and it became the Elementary and Middle
School
24 Best Education Use of Facilities Study. There were four
25 bidders from that RFP, and the meeting was July 12th
and

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1 July 13th. We interviewed four bidders, actually, on the
2 12th then the 13th the committee, as well as the

3 administration leadership team, went to a scoring
process

4 and subsequently awarded the bid to NESDEC in an
amount

5 not to exceed \$11,796. That was forwarded to the full
6 committee and ultimately approved with funding coming
7 from a fund balance account that was available from, that
8 was allocated from a previous study that was not
9 conducted, so the transfer and the award of the bid was
10 then approved by the full committee, and that brings us
11 to where we are to date.

12 I also want to thank the administration for the
13 handout that went out to the, at least the notification
14 that went out to the children and students in the

15 district to help promote this forum.

16 So with that I'm going to turn it over to

17 Mr. Kennedy.

18 MR. DONALD KENNEDY: Thank you, Jeff. I'm

19 Donald Kennedy from New England School Development

20 Council, and Marge Clarke you will be able to recognize.

21 The other person here is John Kennedy, the last one on

22 the list. John is not a relation of mine. Marge was an

23 elementary school teacher, principal, and also early

24 childhood principal. John was a middle and high school

25 teacher and systemwide curriculum director. I was a

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1 **Superintendent of Schools, but before that I was a**
2 **teacher and curriculum person, and my degree is in**
3 **curriculum, not in administration. So we were**
4 **particularly interested that you had us come and asked**
us
5 **to look at the educational uses of space in both your**
6 **present and future program, and we'd like to talk about**
7 **those kind of issues, and we don't often get to do that**
8 **in a lot of the studies that we do.**

9 **Sometimes people discuss where do you get your**
10 **standards from, how you make judgments, are they your**

own

11 personal judgments, and in the slide of which you have
12 copies there is a list of organizations here from which
13 some of our standards are drawn, and we can answer
any
14 questions about it if you're interested. We are going to
15 try to do this presentation as quickly as we can so that
16 there is as much time as possible to get audience
17 comment.

18 This is not the final report. This is our initial
19 take on all of these things. We will talk about
20 potential options, but you will notice at the, on the
21 very last slide of the handout that you have is my e-mail
22 address, and also a fax number, so over the next couple
23 of weeks if you have any additional thoughts that you

24 don't get a chance to say, we're not yet, we have not yet
25 written the final report, and we will be making

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1 additions, subtractions, changes to what you have seen.
2 This is going to be posted on the website, so if you miss
3 it, or if a friend of yours missed it, they're going to
4 get a chance to look at it on the website, but we hope
5 you will get good input.

6 What we were asked to do was to look at a number of
7 issues, which I will come to in just a second, but this

8 is kind of how we process them, and we are trying to do
9 things in an orderly fashion as we have done them in
over
10 a hundred studies of other school districts, some of
11 which were asking similar questions to the ones that
12 you're asking, and we always like to try to come up with
13 options that will make the educational program of the
14 school district at least as good, if not better, than
15 before. So that's one of the things that we're looking
16 at when we determine what might potentially be an
option.

17 We'll be dealing with issues of equity and inequity, and
18 there are many possible definitions of this, but we found
19 at the bottom of the slides there are two somewhat

20 different issues, one has to do with configuration

21 inequity and one has to do with overcrowding inequity.

22 Those are two kinds. There obviously are other kinds to

23 deal with, some children having access to more
resources

24 than others.

25 We were ask some sub questions, how many
students

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1 should Cumberland be planning for. We were asked to
take

2 a fresh look at the pre-K through eight schools. We were
3 not asked to look at the high school and determine best
4 educational use of space, and we were asked to consider
5 whether there were additional alternative grade
6 organizations that would be considered.

7 So in looking at how many students should be
planned

8 for, you can see, although the numbers are pretty small
9 here, that the number of students has been declining.

10 There were about fifty-one hundred students, fifty-two
11 hundred students, fifty-three hundred students, seven,
12 eight years ago. Now you're down to about forty-seven,
13 forty-eight hundred, and we think going on into the
14 future that you're going to drop down from the

15 forty-eight hundred now, drop over the next ten years by
16 another 500 students approximately down to the
17 forty-three, forty-four hundred range. This does include

18 the assumption that Cumberland residents who
complete the

19 eighth grade in June of 2014 and, thereafter, at the
20 Mayoral Academy will not come back to the high school
21 because that's the pattern that you have seen in other
22 communities that have any kind of charter school or
23 reason for students to have left the school system or not
24 enrolled in the school systems to start with, so this
25 does include the outflow of students to the Mayoral

1 Academy. There are, let's see, there are at the fifth
2 grade level, there are 32 Cumberland students in the
3 Mayoral Academy this year, 101 fifth graders, and there
4 are 48 kindergartners and first graders in the Mayoral
5 Academy and 156 who are in that school, and so we did
6 take that into account, and the continuing flow in that
7 direction we assumed is going to be at about the same
8 numbers as have gone there up to now. So essentially

the

9 enrollment which rose a little bit in here and got up to
10 about 5300 and now is down to about 4800 we think is

11 going to go down to about 4500 going ten years out.

12 There are also living in Cumberland another, about

13 650 students who go to nonpublic schools, either

14 parochial or independent schools, about a hundred in

15 independent schools and the others in parochial
schools.

16 Those numbers seem to be pretty constant. We looked
back

17 ten years up till last fall. The official numbers for

18 this fall aren't available yet, but if you look in that

19 ten-year period you see about 41 per grade in nonpublic

20 schools, at the K-5 level per grade, at the middle school

21 level, about 65 per grade at the high school level who

22 are in nonpublic schools.

23 There are many different perspectives one can have.

24 You live here, you pay the taxes, you have a very

25 personal experience with the Cumberland Public
Schools,

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1 and yet when someone is asked to come in and take a
fresh

2 look we won't, we'll never know the Cumberland schools
as

3 intimately as do you, however, we do see a lot of the

4 schools. So we have been in hundreds of elementary

5 schools, a lot of middle schools, and a lot of high
6 schools as well, so it just depends on one perspective.
7 It's not that one perspective is better than the other,
8 it's simply that it's just different.

9 There are three slides. I'm not going to read
10 what's on them, but what you will see is that over the
11 past 50 years as educational programs have changed,
the
12 capacity of school buildings that are older buildings
13 have decreased because as changes have been made,
and
14 things like computers were added, classroom libraries
15 were added, special needs students and assistive aids
16 were added, so schools cannot house because of
changes in

17 the educational program as many students that they
used

18 to, so we have a way of calculating the capacity of
19 school buildings that takes into consideration what is
20 the educational program being taught, and these three
21 slides try to address those issues, and now Marge is
22 going to talk with you about defining some of our terms,
23 and we'll tell you about the elementary schools that she
24 has seen.

25 MS. CLARKE: Thank you. You will be hearing

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1 from me and from John as he speaks two terms, current
2 operating capacity and planned operating capacity, and
3 the definitions are here on the slide, but basically the
4 current operating capacity, which is a mouthful, so I'm
5 going to call it COC when I'm presenting, has to do with
6 what class sizes there are in the schools at the time,
7 and in Cumberland the maximum for a pre-K is 15,
though

8 many of the classes do not reach that number, that's a
9 pretty high number for preschool students in an intricate
10 setting, K-2, 23 students per class, grades 3-6, 24, and
11 grades seven and above, 26, and of course our setting
12 only went as far as the middle schools and current

13 building use. Whatever the rooms are being used for
14 today that's how they calculate the current operating
15 capacity, and they'll be outlined in this slide that I'm
16 going to visit shortly.

17 Now, the planned operating capacity looks ahead and
18 says if there are any classrooms, or any programs that
19 don't have classrooms, for instance, if there is no music
20 room or no art room, but there is a program that in the
21 future the district needs to plan to have rooms for those
22 programs as well, so if a school is particularly full,
23 and it doesn't have rooms for those purposes, you will
24 see that the POC will be less, the planned operating
25 capacity will be fewer students than the current

1 operating capacity, because those rooms are now used
for

2 other purposes, and the other thing is that with the, as

3 you look at the building, we look at how many students

4 can fit into that building at one time, so a district

5 like Cumberland that has half-day kindergarten because

6 you have half of the kindergartners in the morning and

7 the other half in the afternoon you can actually have

8 more students than perhaps the current operating
capacity

9 or the planned operating capacity would lead you to
10 believe, because there are an extra group of students
11 that come for part of the day and then another group
12 comes in, so the planned operating capacity plans for
13 future, and also takes that into mind.

14 The first school, first of all I would like to thank
15 all of the elementary schools for welcoming me. The
16 principals were wonderful. The staff that I spoke to was
17 great, and also the focus groups that we had last week,
18 it was wonderful to have the open dialogue that we had
19 with the groups we met with. The first slide is, has to
20 do with, Don agreed, I sometimes get so involved I forget
21 to change the slides, so Don is going to help me out

22 today. Ashton Elementary School is the first one I'm
23 going to speak to you about tonight, and if you look at
24 the slide or what you have in front of you, there is a
25 lot of information. I'm not going to take the time to

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1 read what grade levels, how many square feet, et cetera,
2 that's pretty clear, and I'm going to talk more about the
3 space, and, I mean the size of the population that can
4 fit in that school, so I'm going to step right down to
5 the very bottom of the --

6 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: What does HDK mean?

7 MS. CLARKE: Half-day kindergarten. When I

8 talked about that I would have said that, so HDK means

9 half-day kindergarten. And we will have questions at the

10 end. So, please, if you have questions regarding a

11 particular term just write them down, and hold them in

12 your mind and we'll have plenty of time at the end.

13 The October 1st enrollment, we use October 1st for

14 all of the enrollments whenever we do the study, so as

15 time goes by if you look at a district you can see, what

16 was it October 1st in 2000, what is it October 1st 2010,

17 or whatever, so that's the common, we always use that

18 date, the October 1st enrollment, and most of the New

19 England states use an October 1st enrollment as their
20 official enrollment for a particular school in a school
21 year. So at Ashton on October 1st the enrollment was
303
22 students, given the classrooms that are in use the
23 current operating capacity is 330 students and if all of
24 the kindergarten classrooms were full, and they have
one
25 morning and one afternoon you could add another 23

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1 half-day kindergarten students to Ashton School, and

2 there would be room for them in the current classrooms.

3 The planned operating capacity is less, 282 students, and

4 two classrooms were taken off for other purposes, and
the

5 next slide you will see that at Ashton there is no room

6 and use for art, no room and use for music, and I just

7 have a note about the original wing, some of the

8 classrooms don't work at that particular location. We

9 have more notes that we didn't include tonight that will

10 be in the final report, observations as we went around

11 the various schools, but for the sake of tonight's

12 presentation we are not going to go into every little

13 detail that we noticed about maintenance or things about

14 the site.

15 Garvin Memorial is the next elementary school.

16 There again, we'll skip down to the October 1st

17 enrollment was 362 students, current operating capacity,

18 the spaces that are currently being used, 377 students,

19 because of half-day kindergarten, an additional 23

20 students can be enrolled at that school. The planned

21 operating capacity is absolutely lower because two

22 classrooms have been taken for other purpose. There is

a

23 room in use for art at Garvin, but there is no room for

24 music and there are some support staff psychologists,

25 social worker, and there is not sufficient space for

1 small groups, so additional classroom for planning

2 purposes. That doesn't mean that a classroom per se

**3 would be used for those purposes, it means that
somewhere**

4 in the school space would need to be captured to make

5 room for those additional staff that are already there.

6 B.F. Norton, and it wouldn't all fit on the slide,

7 the official name is Bernard F. Norton, I understand.

8 Skipping down to the October 1st enrollment, 268

9 students, and at that time there were 79 pre-kindergarten

10 students. Pre-kindergarten students can come in
through

11 the school year as they're identified have need services,
12 because of early childhood requirements, so 79 was the
13 number on October 1st. I'm sure if I were to come ask
14 today there are probably more if there's been additional
15 meetings and by the end of the school year it could
16 exceed, come 90 or more students. Currently operating
17 capacity is 377 students, keeping in mind that there
18 could be, if it was really, it's full to capacity of 15
19 students in the morning and 15 students in the
20 afternoon pre-K there could be an additional 120
21 pre-kindergarten students and there, it's half-day

22 kindergarten so with a morning session and an

afternoon

- 23 session it could be an additional 23 half-day
- 24 kindergarten students housed at B.F. Norton. There are
- 25 four classrooms for pre-K at that school. The planned

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- 1 operating capacity slightly lower, 330. There again
- 2 maximum 120 pre-kindergarten students, and that's two
- 3 classrooms taken for other purposes, and on the next
- 4 slide there is no music room at the moment, they have a
- 5 room for art, and there again some of the professional

6 staff doesn't have sufficient space or other dedicated
7 space, for the social worker there is not a conference
8 room, and there is limited small group space.

9 The next school is Community Elementary School.

10 There again we are going to skip right down to the
11 October 1st enrollment of 691 students. The current
12 operating capacity is 635 with classrooms in use, and
13 with the number of classrooms in use for half-day
14 kindergarten another 92 students could be housed at

15 Community Elementary School. Just to comment there,

I'm

16 sure you're familiar, but it's important for me to

17 mention that Community Elementary School not only
houses

18 their own kindergarten class, but it also houses the
19 Cumberland Hill kindergartners there, because there is
20 not sufficient space at Cumberland Hill the way the
21 district is run. The current operating capacity at
22 Community Elementary is 564 students with three
23 classrooms taken off line for other purposes. At the
24 moment there is no room, there is no room in use for art,
25 none for music, and I did want to make a comment
because

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1 all of your schools have had some kind of expansion, but

the
2 Community has had multiple expansions, and has other,
3 core facilities are really tight. Sometimes an addition
4 is made and another addition is made, but the cafeteria,
5 or the gym, or whatever remain the same. There is also
6 insufficient space for the district literacy, the social
7 worker and some reading staff, and I already mentioned
8 Cumberland Hill kindergartners.

9 This is Cumberland Hill Elementary School, and that
10 also has a much longer name that definitely wouldn't fit
11 on the slide. John J. McLaughlin Cumberland Hill
12 Elementary is the full name of that school. Skipping
13 down to October 1st enrollment was 468 students. You
can

14 see it's very close to the current operating capacity

15 which is 472 students, and because there are no

16 kindergartners there I didn't fill in an additional

17 number to make up for half-day sessions, and the
planned

18 operating capacity is 399 students taking three

19 classrooms off for other purposes which are outlined

20 here. There is no room and use for art or music, and

21 there again there is insufficient space for some of their

22 professionals. There is no dedicated room for

23 conferences and double up for the district math person,

24 and there, the way things are currently districted there

25 is no space for kindergartners, but there are two

1 classrooms at Cumberland Hill that were designed for, to
2 house kindergartners, two in use for grade four. They
3 have grade four right now. This is a summary slide. I
4 covered a lot of territory, and if you look down, you can
5 see all the schools I have mentioned. You can see the
6 current operating capacity. You can see in red the
7 number of classrooms that was utilized to determine the
8 current operating capacity, and you can see the planned
9 operating capacity which I have cited for each school.

10 The fourth column you can see that there are a

11 reduced number of classrooms that we utilize to
determine

12 the planned operating capacity, and the totals are down

13 at the bottom underneath each of those columns, the

14 current operating capacity, if you go down to total is

15 2,191 students as the spaces are currently being used,

16 plus, because we have half-day kindergarten in

17 Cumberland, 161 maps of every kindergarten classroom
had

18 23 additional students for their extra session, their

19 second session, for a total of 2,352 students, plus 120

20 pre-K, and that takes up four classrooms that are

21 currently at B.F. Norton. Take the planned operating

22 capacity if you go right down, and you see if you add all
23 of the numbers the total is 1,904 students and that
24 assumes that at that future time there would be full-day

25 kindergarten, so I have not added any additional
students

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1 for half-day program, and assuming that there remains
2 four classrooms just for pre-K, some are in the district
3 120 pre-K students. Then Don has already gone over the
4 projected enrollments, but we thought this would be
5 helpful in looking to the future. The highest projected

6 enrollment that we had on the slide was 2,172 students,
7 than would be in the next school year plus 90 pre-K is
8 the estimated number. The lowest projected enrollment
9 for the population we are talking about through grade
10 five is 1,172 students, and that would be in 2017-18,
11 that school year, plus assuming no change in the
12 pre-school program up to 90 pre-kindergarten students
13 the projection, so if you compare the numbers that we
14 have for the total way that the space is being used right
15 now, the way the space is being used right now next
16 even though there will be 2,172 students there will be
17 sufficient space if you continue to use the schools the

is

year,

18 way you are today, and as the numbers decline, you can
19 see that the low in our projections, this 1,973 students,
20 and if you compare that to our numbers if you were to
21 have art rooms and music rooms and take the space for
the
22 other programs, you would, in fact, be tight for space in
23 the future. So even though 12 classrooms have come
24 offline in order to make up for some of the deficiencies
25 in the space you can still manage, you don't have to

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1 build a school, but you also, we don't believe that you
2 could close the school either, because your numbers are
3 very, very close to the capacities, whether you have art
4 and music rooms or you don't, and then as Don

mentioned

5 earlier, it's been a pleasure to come and really take a
6 closer look at your programs, not just the space, and
7 these are all, came out either in my discussions with
8 principals, visits to schools, or through the groups that
9 we met with across the district a week ago, but there are
10 some good things here, and there are some things that
11 need to be addressed, but these are my notes. I have
12 three pages of them, and I'm not going to read them all
13 to you, there are a lot of things to be celebrating, and

14 there are also some things that you're working on, but
we

15 didn't want to have a presentation without
acknowledging

16 the reason that we are looking at the school space is
17 because we have students going to school and these are
18 the programs that your school district provides. And I'm
19 going to turn it over to John Kennedy who is going to
20 talk about his visits to the middle schools.

21 MR. JOHN KENNEDY: Okay. Thank you very
22 much, Marge, and I would also like to say that it was
23 certainly a pleasure visiting the middle schools in town
24 and meeting with the principals and also the staff
25 members, and also during the focus group, and actually

as

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1 I look around I see several people who attended those
2 focus group meetings. One of the things that we noticed
3 as we go from school to school and town to town, there
4 was a tremendous amount of pride exhibited in the
school
5 system, and a great positive feeling that seemed to come
6 out, and to be honest with you we don't always see that
7 as we travel from place to place. The information that
8 I'm going to be presenting, first of all, has to do with

9 the North Cumberland Middle School. It's a two-level
10 building, and you can see it contains the same
11 information that, the same type of information that Marge
12 provided for you, and if you look at the October 1
13 enrollment of 6-28 you notice that the current operating
14 capacity is 639, the planned operating capacity is also
15 639. We did not have to provide any additional purpose
16 or take rooms for additional purpose, and so you can
see
17 how tight that enrollment situation is. Now, with the
18 North Cumberland Middle School, there were some
issues
19 that we wanted to make note of. Probably most notably
is

20 the computer access being limited. There is a talk of
21 converting a former industrial arts area to tech-ed and
22 to use that for, as an instruction, excuse me, a sign-out
23 lab, that would be very helpful. Also access to
24 instructional technology is limited. By that we mean
25 projection capacity, LCD projectors, and Smart Board

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1 technology, the types of things that frequently districts
2 are beginning to institute. The computer room needs
3 working AC. There is an air conditioning system there,

4 but it's not functioning, and that is extremely difficult
5 on probably a day like today, but definitely during the
6 September and June dates, field and play space is
7 inadequate. The students have to travel off site for
8 practices and games. Event parking is limited. This is
9 true in many districts, but we felt that it was important
10 to note, and the traffic is congested during, due to that
11 single entrance and exit point. Any of you who have
12 pulled up there at the start or end of school know that
13 traffic is parked along the Nate Whipple area, and
14 sometimes that can be a little difficult for folks.

15 And then we go to the Joseph L. McCourt Middle
16 School, and here you see the front entrance. It's a

17 single level area, and the, 517 was the October 1st
18 enrollment, and so you see that there is a little bit of
19 play space, so to speak, here 589 would be the current
20 operating capacity, and 563 would be the planned
21 operating capacity. One classroom taken for other
22 purposes, and as you look over here and you go to the
top
23 line, very limited conference space at the McCourt
24 School, and it's used primarily for IEP meetings, and if
25 you go to the bottom line, storage space for the library

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1 and instructional materials, custodial supplies, all of
2 those areas are inadequate. Teacher work space is
3 limited. The ALP room needs to be reconfigured, and by
4 that I mean it was the original family consumer science
5 room, and a lot of the appliances are still there, and so
6 eventually it will be setup so that just one kitchen
7 setup is in the room. Again, technology access is
8 limited, one to two computers to a classroom, field and
9 play space. There is just that field to the right as you
10 come in the driveway which is used for most of the
11 sporting programs, and then the note on event parking.

12 Now, middle school program notes, as was the case
13 with Marge, I'm not going to go through them all with

14 you. I would like to say, however, that top statement
15 is, in my judgment, and I believe in many other peoples',

16 accurate, there has been an implementation of the
middle

17 school motto and that is very important, and we don't

18 always see that, and as you take a look these are some
of

19 the needs that we identified, all of which, I believe I

20 referenced with the exception of the third one. So this

21 is where we stand today.

22 Now, next we move to the statement of the problem

23 for the district, and as we take a look at this we see

24 there is a need to continue to fund schedules for

25 maintenance and repair, capital improvement. Secondly,

1 there is a need to continue town-school communication

2 regarding educational and facility, long-term educational

3 and facility issues. We find as we move from place to

**4 place, that oftentimes this can become a very
contentious**

5 thing between town and school government, and it's very

6 important that it become a cooperative effort in order to

7 gain the best results, and that takes a lot of good

**8 communication and hard work in order to accomplish
that**

9 goal, and obviously a need to adopt a long-range plan for
10 pre-K through 12, and then I would just, I'm not going to
11 read all the rest of these to you, but I think the first
12 bullet is extremely important, and then obviously to
13 implement the plan that is going to gain the most
14 educationally effective use of school facilities, and
15 obviously the other bullets are also significant.

16 Now, the economic outlook back in May of 2009, I had
17 the opportunity to attend a conference at the Boston

18 Federal Reserve building and the featured speaker at
that

19 time was Mark Zandi, maybe some of you are familiar
with

20 him. He is frequently on national networks. He's an

21 economist, chief economist at Moody's, and there were

22 several other people there representing New England,
and

23 you can see the Rhode Island representative we listed.

24 There were also representatives from Connecticut,

25 Massachusetts, and so on throughout New England, and
the

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1 question they asked was can we afford the future, and
the

2 answer they came up with was no, and they highlighted

3 several factors that they felt were going to make it
4 extremely difficult for school districts over the next
5 couple of years to deal with economic issues. Well, we
6 all know that that prediction certainly came true, and
7 there have been several follow-ups since then that have
8 all indicated that it looks like through the year 2014
9 there will be continued stress with regard to state
10 revenues, federal revenues, and local revenues that will

11 have a major impact on school budgets as we move
forward.

12 We will be attending a follow-up conference in another
13 week or so, and the title of that particular conference
14 is Deficits As Far As The Eye Can See, so obviously the
15 economic picture is not a great one. Now, if we take a

16 look at future budgets, just about every district that we
17 come into contact with is dealing with the same kind of
18 assumptions that we see here, that are, some of which
are
19 pertinent to Cumberland, and also the same expense
20 appropriation assumptions that we see here that are
21 pertinent to Cumberland. So, it makes for a difficult
22 situation as we move down the road, and this is just a
23 graphic representation of what we see over the course of
24 the next few years.

25 Now we are going to go into the options.

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1 **MS. CLARKE:** Sometimes when we go into a
2 **district there is a space at the next level. In looking**
3 **at the elementary schools that are tight for space, there**
4 **will be room at the middle schools, and you probably all**
5 **know of districts that have reassigned an elementary**
6 **grade to the middle school level. In fact, we have even**
7 **seen some districts that have put their fifth graders and**
8 **then some districts that, due to these hard economic**
9 **times and space at the middle school level have actually**
10 **took the fourth graders. They're not at the middle**

11 **school program, but they're housed at space in the**
middle

12 school building or buildings. After hearing what John
13 had to say about the operating capacities at your middle
14 schools that is not an option here in Cumberland, so we

15 weren't able to come up with some really, sort of
amazing

16 options for the district because your schools are full to
17 capacity if not exceeding capacity in the studies that we
18 did across the district. So, our first, we have several
19 options. They are non-prioritized. It isn't like number
20 one is number one, and number three is number three.

21 These are all considerations for the district. There

22 might be aspects that could be added or subtracted.
They

23 don't have to stand separately in all cases either, but

24 the first option is status quo, do nothing, keep
25 everything the way it is, have one pre-K school through

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1 grade five, three K-5 schools and 1 grade 1-5 school, and
2 there are several advantages, there are several
3 disadvantages. I want to state up front that the
4 disadvantages and advantages are not all one size does
5 not fit all, some of the disadvantages might be a big
6 item or a small item, so it's not a numbers game, you
7 know, how many dots were there for each case, but one

of

8 the things that we heard throughout our visits is how
9 fond people in Cumberland are of your neighborhood
10 elementary schools, of having a school nearby that their
11 children attend. Not all children attend the school
12 that's closest to them. It depends on other factors.
13 Sometimes there is a special program, for instance,
14 English language learners might opt to be at B.F. Norton
15 or a student that has a particular need might have a
16 program in a school other than their neighborhood, and

of

17 course we have the Cumberland Hill kindergarten
students
18 who don't attend kindergarten in their neighborhood,

19 **their closest school. They go over to Community, but**
20 **there are a number of advantages, there are a number of**
21 **disadvantages. One of the disadvantages is if you don't**
22 **change anything there is not going to be any budgetary**
23 **benefit from keeping things the way they are, and there**
24 **will be more of a shortfall, more staff cuts and so forth**
25 **as this declining revenue situation hits not only**

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1 **Cumberland but across New England and the country.**
There

2 **are also, would continue to be within this plan the**

3 Cumberland Hill kindergarten students are the only ones
4 who don't start out in their neighborhood school, so
5 that's something to be considered, and there is less
6 equitable sharing of resources than what is going to be
7 seen as Option 3. When you have multiple places where
8 you're putting students, and where you have to have
9 library materials to support the curriculum for those
10 grade levels, and you have support programs, you have
11 more, less, you have to fund those at all of those sites,
12 so it is not, it doesn't address some of the concerns we
13 have about the economic forecast and what's coming

our

14 way. So that's 1(A). Everything stays the same. This

15 is called 1(B), because it is just a slight adjustment to
16 1(A), which would be to realign the grade level
17 configuration, so that we had, you had the
18 kindergartners, each school would have its
19 kindergartners, and it would require a slight
20 redistricting so that there would be room at Cumberland
21 Hill for the kindergartners, and some of the students
22 that currently attend Cumberland Hill would have to be
23 reassigned to other schools in order to make that
24 possible, and then there would be an adjustment of the
25 district lines for the middle school. As John explained

1 one of the schools is really close to maximum, and the
2 other school has perhaps a little bit of space, it is
3 nothing major, but if there was some change in the
4 districting to accommodate the Cumberland Hill
situation,
5 it might be good to look at the middle schools at that
6 same time once you're talking about any adjustments
7 that's a good time to do it. Again, it has many of the
8 same advantages as 1(A). In addition it would have all
9 of the students at, that go to a neighborhood school,
10 they would all start in kindergarten, they won't have to
11 make a transition, and I know they do a wonderful job of

12 welcoming the students and so forth, but it isn't equal

13 across the district as far as that goes, and there are

14 some disadvantages to Option 1(B). Anyhow, there
would

15 not be, there would be less equitable sharing of

16 resources in Option 3, it would be basically the same as

17 Option 1(A) and it really wouldn't be a cost saver

18 because it isn't a major adjustment. It's just that some

19 students would be in another school.

20 Option 2, Option 2 given that we have five schools

21 and what would be a possible use for them, and you
have

22 heard of this one before, it's pre-K and K at one school

23 and four grades 1-5 schools. There are some

advantages

24 to having all of the early childhood professionals at one
25 site. Currently, all of the pre-K professionals are at

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1 one site with one classroom of kindergartners, but if all
2 of the pre-K and K students attended one school there
3 would be many advantages for the early childhood
4 resources. I'm sure you're aware that not only is there
5 a pre-K program, but there is also an outreach program
6 and some people come with their young preschoolers for

7 various services, and they currently come to B.F. Norton,
8 but there are a lot of advantages to having all of the
9 early childhood professionals together at one site
10 including professional development. It would maintain
11 some neighborhood schools, but there would be four. In
12 other words, the neighborhood would grow a little bit.
13 Instead of having five you would have four, and it would
14 reduce the number of schools needing grade five
15 materials, one through five materials, but just by one.
16 It would just be a 20 percent reduction in the number of
17 sites, so to speak. And if you look at the bottom
18 advantage the cost savings would mitigate some of the
19 negative impact of the impending budget shortfalls, but

20 not, would save more than Option 1(A) or 1(B), but it
21 wouldn't save as much as you might save with an Option

3.

22 The disadvantages, there are a number here
23 including, we talked about transportation, the different
24 sites that would be used for various purposes, there
25 would be some impact, the first year. Whenever there is

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1 a major change, there are many things on the
2 disadvantages that are a one-year situation. It would
3 require redistricting from five to four, and it would

4 utilize the school that was, perhaps, not, that was
5 designed for elementary students. All of your elementary
6 schools were designed or redesigned, in the case of B.F.
7 Norton it was redone, I don't know if you've been inside,
8 but it's beautiful inside, it has a lot of nice features,
9 but they're all built as elementary schools with a couple
10 of kindergarten classrooms, and then the rest with grade
11 school and above in mind. So there would be some
impact
12 on them, for the first year especially with new students
13 from other places coming to the school.

14 Option 3, we have more disadvantages, costs savings
15 would mitigate some of the negative impact, but it

16 wouldn't be as much as Option 3. Option 3 you have
also

17 heard before it's pre-K and K at one school, and then

18 what we are calling paired schools, some districts call

19 them sister schools. Two grade one through three
schools

20 and two grade four through five schools. I just want to

21 provide a little insight. In some districts where we

22 have worked they have elementary schools that are all

23 pretty much the same size, and if they have an even

24 number, you know, they can do a K through two, three

25 through five split, and have sister schools that way, but

1 Cumberland happens to need five elementary schools.
You

2 have enough students so you have to have five
elementary

3 schools at least at the size you have right now, and so

4 you have an extra school left over, so if you're going to

5 do any kind of pairing you have to have two by two, and

6 you have to have more grades in the bigger schools than

7 you have in the smaller schools. They're not

8 dramatically different, but they're different enough so

9 that they're not all the same size, so that is a factor.

10 There are some advantages, that we have already

11 sited in Option 2 regarding having early childhood

12 facility and the professionals together and so forth, but

13 there are some added advantages when you only have
two

14 sites for the lower elementary grades, grades one
through

15 three, and you would have two sites for the grades four,

16 five. When you're trying to do professional development

17 when you're providing materials, there are a lot of

18 reasons that this actually can be a benefit for the

19 academic program, especially during times when things
are

20 tight. For instance, if you need to provide curriculum

21 materials for a new fourth grade unit, you have two

22 libraries and two schools that need those resources, you

**23 don't have four or five, depending on which option we
are**

24 talking about, and there are more equitable sharing of

25 those resources, and if you look at the last item on this

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1 slide provides the largest estimated cost savings. One

2 of the biggest expenses for schools is that it is people

3 intensive. You have to have teachers to teach, and when

4 you have five, students in the same grade level at four

5 or five locations, if you have a large number of people

6 who buy houses that happen to have fourth-graders, and
7 they all end up in one neighborhood school it could mean
8 that you need to add a teacher. Well, if you put fewer
9 places for those fourth grade students then all of a
10 sudden there are five or six more, they can be shared
11 among more classrooms, so you don't have that sort of
ebb
12 and flow. It's not as dramatic an impact, but it also
13 provides professional development opportunity and
14 material sharing opportunity that you don't have with the
15 smaller schools, and many districts are having to make
16 some tough choices in order to, you know, make these
17 changes.

18 There are disadvantages as well. Somehow the last

19 option, disadvantage for three at the bottom came out as
20 a disadvantage. We'll shift it over. It really is an
21 advantage to have more equitable sharing of resources.
22 It's not a disadvantage and that was a typo to end up on
23 this slide, but there are some disadvantages. It reduces
24 the neighborhood elementary schools with paired
schools
25 to, instead of having four and five, actually you have

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1 two big neighborhoods. In one district where we worked

2 in I haven't really thought about it that way, but

3 instead of having smaller neighborhoods you have
bigger

4 neighborhoods, and it is an adjustment, but we have
seen

5 it happen, and it can work. It requires relocation of

6 materials. There are some things that are a one-time

7 expense, like relocating everybody, transitioning

8 students, redistricting, they're all the things that you

9 have to do to make this happen, but many of them are
one

10 time, they're not a long-term disadvantage and even

11 having the, about the six or seventh bullet down here

12 requires PTOs to regroup that is one, it takes energy,

13 but it can happen, and I was a principal in a district

14 that did go to, we, to paired schools that was about
15 15 years ago, and it was a big adjustment but we did it,
16 and they still have that configuration in that district
17 where I was once a sitting principal. So, there are,
18 pluses and minuses to all of these options. These are
19 the ones given the space, given the operating capacity
20 that you have as a district. These are the options that
21 we have here tonight.

22 MR. DONALD KENNEDY: Thank you, we're
almost

23 done, and we are going to come to you really quickly.
We

24 are trying to present a lot of information really fast
25 and as we state we can each, different things that other

**1 people neglected to say. John and Marge were in
schools**

2 with children in them. We did this intentionally. Marge

3 did do a quick run through the elementary schools this

**4 summer, because she wanted not to miss your principal
who**

5 was retiring, and then she came back again to see the

6 schools again with children in them, and John did the

**7 same thing. Another thing I wanted to mention to you,
we**

8 talked about the, we called them focus groups that we
9 had, we have got a list of the questions that we asked
10 people in those groups, and I brought a set of the
11 questions with me so that if anybody is interested we are
12 happy to give them to you, and we'll put them up on the
13 website because we're interested in hearing your input
14 and your reactions to any of these questions. We met
15 with about a hundred people. It was the seven school
16 improvement teams and there were an average of like
17 to 12 people who would come to those meetings. We
18 with the principal and assistant principals, the two
19 leaders of the Cumberland Teachers Association. We

three

met

met

20 with two school committee members. We met with the
seven

21 PTO presidents, the chairman of the Special Education

22 Parent Advisory Committee or council, and there were a

23 couple of additional people, so there were about nine

24 people in that group. I saw four people at town hall,

25 the finance director, the planner, the town council

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1 president, and the mayor, and the mayor took me on a

2 walk-through of the Mayoral Academy. The two bus
company

3 schedulers, we talked with them, and certainly with the
4 central office administrators. We tried not to count
5 anybody more than once. The principals, for example,
6 were in several different combinations and meetings, but
7 we saw over a hundred people and we are hoping that
you
8 will give us additional input as well. So just to wind
9 up with these last couple of slides. With any of the
10 options, even the status quo, there are some additional
11 considerations, places that you could look for additional
12 savings if you need to do that, because all of these
13 things we are thinking about in relation to if every
14 school in New England, every school district in New

15 England is going to have a series of even tougher
budget

16 discussions than they've had in the past, everybody is

17 going to be needing to reduce expenses so whether or
not

18 you reorganize anything or change anything, what you're

19 trying to do in most cases is save money on the side so

20 you won't have to lay off any employees, because about
82

21 percent of your budget is always over 80 percent in

22 almost every school district. In yours it's about 82.

23 Eight-two cents in every dollar of your budget is spent

24 on people, and for their salaries and benefits, and the

25 schools are obviously labor intensive, so the more
money

1 you can save in other places, and these are some
2 suggestions of places that you might look. All of the
3 money you can save here is money that you don't have to
4 save in laying off additional people.

5 There are some long-term considerations that we want
6 to make sure that you keep in the back of your mind
while

7 you're trying to get through the short term, and you have
8 got some work to do in expanding technology. You don't
9 have as much technology in grades K-8 as many of the

10 school systems that we go into. You may also want to
11 look at expanding your capacity at the pre-K level and
12 moving toward full-day kindergarten. Everybody will be
13 doing that, but the faster you can do it the better
14 education experience you're going to give to students,
15 and in the long run not only does it benefit them to be
16 successful at the beginning, but it costs you less money
17 because remediation in grades one, two, three, four, is
18 much more expensive than the children having to learn
19 things when they were in pre-K and K, so if you can do it
20 sooner, if you can get to the point where you have the
21 money and the space to do that, you'll be making a really
22 strong long-term investment, and the school systems

which

23 are the most effective and productive are the ones that

24 have put a lot of emphasis at that age level. There are

**25 capital improvement needs that we have mentioned
before,**

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1 and so some, you have done most of your buildings

2 concerning education for the handicapped and making

3 barrier-free buildings, but there is little bit more to

4 go. So, I will stop, and the three of us will stand up,

5 and we'll be happy to answer your questions and take

your

6 comments. Pardon us if we don't all look at you at the

7 same time, because we have to take notes as you go
along,

8 and we want to make sure that we get a chance to try to

9 write down your comments, so if people can come to the

10 microphones and line up, it would help if you would say

11 your name when you're speaking, and then we'll know
where

12 that came from, and we can keep track of, in the

13 transcript who, from which level had which kinds of

14 comments to say. So John, Marge, and I would love to

15 hear your reaction. Tonight is a reality check. If we

16 have said things that don't make sense, we need to know

17 that. If we have forgotten some things that you think we
18 need to know about, tell us that. The full report won't
19 be written for several weeks, so we hope to get input
20 from you both tonight, and also on this slide it shows
21 you how to get in touch with us if you think of things
22 beyond tonight, so we would like to get some more input
23 from you.

24 MR. MUTTER: Let me interject for a minute.

25 Do we actually have a sign-in sheet at the podium there

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1 at all? You wouldn't know if you were going to speak
2 until after the presentation. The only reason that we
3 are going to need the sign-in sheet is to match up to the
4 record.

5 MS. CLARKE: Would you like to speak, sir?

6 MR. DI MODICA: Yes, please. My name is

7 Paul DiModica, D-I-M-O-D-I-C-A. I have a couple

8 questions. Are there any other districts, school

9 districts in Rhode Island that are doing this currently,

10 I shouldn't say currently but proposed plans at all right

11 now?

12 MR. DONALD KENNEDY: Last year we worked

13 with South Kingstown. We are now working on
Aquidneck

14 Island right now. Those three districts that are on that
15 island are thinking of, over the long term, possibly
16 combining into a single school district. Although that's
17 obviously something you don't just do in one year. That
18 could take five years to do. We have worked in several
19 Massachusetts and Connecticut communities, but those
are
20 the only ones in Rhode Island that we have recently
21 worked with.

22 MR. DI MODICA: Did any of them implement,
23 did South Kingstown implement this?

24 MR. DONALD KENNEDY: It was a little bit
25 different type of study. Both North Branford and

1 Wallingford, Connecticut implemented things, and also

2 Taunton and Pittsfield in Massachusetts implemented

3 things, but as John said at the very beginning, every

4 district we visit is a little different from every other

5 one, and all, in three out of four of those districts

6 there was enough space in their schools, so that if they

7 moved grades around they could close a school, so their

8 incentive was to move grades in a way that hopefully
made

9 it better for children, but also allowed them to save

10 money by closing a school, and then the fourth one it
was

11 moving children to make it better, but there wasn't space
12 to close the school, but those were all implemented.

13 MR. DI MODICA: Another question, sir, was

14 that this has been printed in the newspapers that with

15 the new student aid formula Cumberland could be
seeing as

16 much as \$4 million in the next four to five years. I

17 guess it starts in 2012 when this new formula goes into

18 effect. Was that taken into consideration here

19 moneywise. I mean, I seen the slides talking about

20 cutting programs or teachers and staff, but was that

21 taken into consideration?

22 **MR. DONALD KENNEDY:** Right, as best we can
23 estimate, and you should talk with Alex, you know, who
24 can make a better estimate than I can, but as best we can
25 estimate, your expense curve will outpace your revenue

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1 **curve, you know, the expected revenue from the state**
over
2 **the next few years, and get progressively more difficult**
3 **to meet. So, you have really got two issues to think**
4 **about, you know, we were asked to look at education,**
and

5 we did, and we only looked at the money part at the end.

6 So, we have talked about several things in here that

7 could allow you to make things better for kids, but then

8 we tried to crank in the factor of, but what if it was

9 less money can it still be better for kids, so we were

10 trying to figure out ways of laying off the least number

11 of teachers, because if there is anything that the

12 educational research is clear about in most educational

13 research you get mixed answers, so if study A says to
do

14 something, study B says to do the opposite, but in the

15 case of class size, it's almost always beneficial to

16 students if class sizes are smaller, and we were trying

17 to figure out ways that your class sizes could be kept as
18 small as they reasonably could be, so that's the reason
19 why at the end we were trying focus on money issues.

20 MR. DI MODICA: In your final report will

21 you have projections in regards to what those class
sizes

22 will be?

23 MR. DONALD KENNEDY: Yes.

24 MR. DI MODICA: Thank you.

25 MR. MUTTER: Can I interject for just one

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1 second? When we did discuss the RFP back in June,
there

2 was an add to that which encompassed educational
3 literature that would be provided that would support any
4 of the options. Is that going to be provided?

5 MR. DONALD KENNEDY: Yes.

6 MR. MUTTER: Thank you.

7 MS. CLARKE: Yes.

8 MS. LAMBERT: I'm Kathy Lambert. Option 3

9 under disadvantages says "replaces neighborhood

10 elementary schools with paired schools," and you

11 mentioned two big neighborhoods would result, and I
just

12 want the committee to realize that Cumberland I think is

13 still battling the ill effects in trying to deal with ill

14 effects of the north-south divide, and the negative

15 implications that it has for students especially at the

16 high school level, and the other thing that you didn't

17 mention is that Option 2 and 3 would put the pre-K and

18 the K possibly in the only elementary school in town that

19 was, none of the rooms were designed for early
childhood,

20 none of the rooms, as far as I know, are larger than the

21 regular, none of them have bathrooms in the
classrooms,

22 um, there is, like, there is a couple of good rooms in

23 the district for early childhood, but they don't happen,

24 they're in only four out of the five of the elementary

25 schools.

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1 **MS. CLARKE: It is very interesting to me,**
2 **because one of the things that I do look at when I go to**
3 **elementary schools is if there are any rooms that were,**
4 **as far as the current sitting principal, and I can figure**
5 **out, sometimes we don't have the original architectural**
6 **plans available, and sometimes things have been added.**

7 **Many elementary schools in New England were built**
before

8 there was kindergarten programming, or if it was half day

9 they didn't worry about it being big enough, they didn't

10 have centers and so forth, but one of the things that I

11 noted on the general information slide is that if there

12 were any rooms that were being used for kindergarten
they

13 were built for kindergarten, and right now, if you look

14 across the district, I kind of did a little slapshot

15 myself, because I anticipated this question would come

16 up, right now there are two kindergarten classrooms in

17 use that were built for kindergarten at Community, and

18 then one of the rooms is being used for kindergarten and

19 was built as an art room, and at Garvin there is one of

20 the rooms that was built for kindergarten and there are

21 two there that's being used for kindergarten, so most of
22 the kindergarten classrooms right now are not in rooms
23 that are designed for kindergarten, not that that's
24 necessarily a good or bad thing, but that's just the way
25 it is with the number of special programs that are

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1 required today to meet the needs of our student
2 population.

3 **MS. LAMBERT:** In Community there are four
4 kindergarten classrooms. Three of them were designed,

5 three are designed for kindergarten and one was the art
6 room.

7 **MS. CLARKE:** That's not what I was told, so
8 I don't know if I have --

9 **MS. LAMBERT:** Maybe one of them was designed
10 for preschool.

11 **MS. CLARKE:** I will check my, as I said when
12 the principal and I put our heads together trying to
13 figure out, well, was it an art room, was it an early
14 childhood room --

15 **MS. LAMBERT:** It definitely is an art room
16 being used as kindergarten.

17 **MS. CLARKE:** So you're not where you need to

18 be as far as the current space is, either. Thank you for
19 bringing that to our attention.

20 MS. SPURLOCK: My name is Shannon Spurlock.

21 MS. CLARKE: Welcome.

22 MS. SPURLOCK: Thank you. I was looking at
23 the Options 2 or 3, because those seem to have the most
24 significant change in terms of the status quo, and I
25 heard there was some discussion about savings, and it's

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1 not real clear to me based on this presentation how much

2 savings we are talking about, with plan Option 2 and
3 Option 3. I know you can't give us a dollar amount, but
4 percentagewise to give us some kind of measurement to
see
5 what kind of cost benefit analysis we are looking at with
6 these options.

7 MS. CLARKE: Let me pass this onto Don
8 because he's our finance man.

9 MR. DONALD KENNEDY: I'm going to give you a
10 two-part answer. Probably neither part will feel that
11 satisfying. One is in our final report we will try to
12 answer that question in a much more precise way. We
are
13 still working out the details of what some of this would

14 be, and we also knew that some additional options might
15 get considered tonight or suggested tonight. Other
16 things may be described tonight as being so beyond
17 anybody's interest that they wouldn't want to look at
18 them anyway. So partly we are going to have to answer
19 any money questions later, and we were asked not
20 specifically to look at money but to look at educational
21 programs. I guess the other piece of the answer I can
22 give you that's a little bit more definite, you may
23 remember that there was an unpopular plan that was
24 presented last winter, and at the time the school
25 district costed the potential saving is about \$500,000.

1 We, obviously as you go from year to year you're talking
2 about different numbers of sections at different grade
3 levels, and you're talking about different teachers who
4 would teach those programs and things like that, but
when
5 we went back and tried to examine the costing that the
6 district had done, it appeared to us that the district
7 had underestimated the potential saving, and, in fact,
8 had looked to us as if even though there were a couple
9 of positions that would have been added, I think it was a

10 .3 child find, or child coordinator, and a, and a point,

11 I think it was five, maybe, media person or something

12 like that that would have been added. Even with that

13 added there would have been enough subtractions to
have

14 saved well more than the \$500,000 that was being
claimed

15 by the district. They had counted for about 16 or 17,000

16 cost of moving, so that cost had been done. They didn't

17 claim any cost savings for bussing, even though we

18 thought when we looked at it, that because there would

19 have probably been too fewer noontime kindergarten
runs

20 that there would have been some saving there, and
maybe

21 some additional savings elsewhere, but they didn't claim
22 that, so just to take a snapshot, there is potentially a
23 lot of saving once you start doing a thoughtful reuse of
24 space if you are satisfied that educationally it will be
25 good for the children. I mean, you wouldn't want to do

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1 something that you thought would be hurting children,
2 even if it did save you some money. So, in our
3 reexamining the district costing we were told that some
4 people questioned were those estimated savings too
high,

5 and if anything, we NESDEC independently thought their

6 estimate was too low in what the savings would have
been,

7 although I certainly realized how unpopular it was at

8 that time. I guess the other thing I should say too is

9 that timing is everything, and I would certainly hope

10 that whatever the school committee decides to do with

11 the NESDEC report, that they would start immediately

12 thinking about it, talking about it, discussing it with

13 whoever it needs to be discussed with, and make some
kind

14 of definite decisions by, I don't know, first of the

15 year, you know, mid winter, because the worst thing that

16 can happen is you debate and discuss and carry things

on

17 so long that it goes beyond February vacation, you
know,

18 beyond the spring vacation, and the best of plans
become

19 extraordinarily difficult to implement, well, if you make

20 the decision too late, so I would hope that there is an

21 intensive period of discussion in early to mid winter,

22 and some kind of decision gets made so parents know,

23 teachers know, everybody knows, children know what
the

24 plan is going to be, you know, whether it's status quo,

25 and a lot of people are being laid off, or whether there

1 is going to be some movement around, and so many
people

2 are being laid off, but the fact that the budget is going

3 to be so bad for so long in every New England school

4 district is going to mean that a lot more budget

5 discussion has to happen earlier in the year than it's

6 ever been happening before, but I'm really glad you
asked

7 the money question.

8 MS. CLARKE: Did you give her a ballpark?

9 MR. DONALD KENNEDY: No, I didn't, and I

10 will give you, we will give you, I told you the answer

11 was going to be unsatisfying, and I'm sure it is.

12 MS. SPURLOCK: You were right.

13 MR. DONALD KENNEDY: But in the end we will

14 give you some answer.

15 MS. SPURLOCK: Is it fair to say that within

16 the next few weeks there will be a report with some

17 estimates that we can respond to, and that there will be

18 an opportunity for us to have a dialogue once we have
the

19 full report?

20 MR. DONALD KENNEDY: We will have the full

21 report within a month, and the school department will be

22 discussing that and having dialogues going on and on,
but

23 at that point it will be between you and the school
24 department, and the NESDEC report will be the report.

25 MS. SPURLOCK: The other question I have --

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1 MR. DONALD KENNEDY: That's why I hope
2 people will respond in the next couple of weeks.

3 MS. SPURLOCK: I apologize. I didn't mean
4 to interrupt you. I just had one more question, and one
5 of the things that you had mentioned because some of
6 these options you just want to throw out the window,

7 because they may not be feasible, and I would advocate
8 for Option 3 to be thrown out the window if I were to
9 give my personal opinion, and I have a mic so I can, but
10 I feel like one of the things that I feel like is missing
11 here is a discussion about how transition, particularly
12 with Option 3, transition from school to school
13 interrupts the educational experience and basically
14 students' ability to achieve. I mean, I, as a parent of
15 two children have some significant concerns about my
16 child having to, potentially for my youngest one, four
17 times before they complete elementary school to have
18 transitioned into different schools, and for my older
19 child at least three times. This is before they get into

20 middle school. I wonder if you thought about that and
do

21 you have any response to that?

22 MS. CLARKE: I'll address that. We did

23 allude to it as a disadvantage with the number of

24 transitions. One of the observations we have is that if

25 there are paired schools, and they work closely together

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1 and they provide opportunities not only for a move up

2 time but you actually get the students together, they

3 visit one another's sites, maybe they have buddy classes
4 at the other school, maybe they have to get together with
5 another grade level for field day, that kind of thing,
6 that you can have a community that is not two separate
7 schools, but it really is a paired, they're sort of the
8 same family, and they do things together, maybe not
9 everything together, but they do some things together, so
10 it can be successful, we all know school systems where
11 they do not do transition well, and it can be very
12 difficult, especially for some students that aren't very
13 flexible. I'm not so sure it has much to do with their
14 age as much as how they accept change. Usually the
kids
15 do better than the adults, because kids are like, okay,

16 is this the way we do it, okay, show me the way. I'm on
17 my way to my new school, but it's important to provide
18 transitions, so yes, we are aware of that, and it is
19 cited as something that is, there would be more
20 transitions required at Option 3 than the others.

21 MS. SPURLOCK: Is that going to be in the

22 report I'm talking about the, maybe academic
performance

23 implications of those transitions, will that be part of
24 the report?

25 MS. CLARKE: I'm not sure there is any

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1 specific research on academic.

2 **MR. DONALD KENNEDY:** There is some research,
3 and we'll include it.

4 **MS. SPURLOCK:** Thank you so much. I look
5 forward to seeing your report.

6 **MS. CLARKE:** Thank you so much. Over here,
7 we'll come back.

8 **MR. HIGGINS:** My name is John Higgins. My
9 daughter is a second grader at Cumberland Hill. In this
10 presentation I don't see anything about a conclusion.
11 Will you be putting a conclusion in the final report?

12 MS. CLARKE: You mean as far as a specific
13 recommendation?

14 MR. HIGGINS: Yeah.

15 MS. CLARKE: No, and the reason, and at
16 NESDEC, and this is one of the things I really appreciate
17 about NESDEC not only having heard reports before I
18 started working with NESDEC, you know, as a
professional

19 is that we believe that the decisions need to come from
20 the local level, you know, we have, there are all kinds
21 of possibilities here, some, you need to be in charge,
22 your leaders and the community need to decide what's
23 going to be best in this community. So, we will provide
24 options. We might add options. We might take options

25 away after we have had a meeting like this, but we do not

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1 come out with one recommendation.

2 MR. HIGGINS: All of the options I have seen

3 so far is stuff that have been out for a while. Do you

4 guys have any options that we aren't even considering?

5 MS. CLARKE: If we have them they're out

6 there. Do you have any that you would like us to

7 consider that we haven't put up?

8 MR. HIGGINS: I don't know. You guys are

9 the professionals. I didn't know if you had any

10 different ideas we haven't heard.

11 MR. JOHN KENNEDY: Just very quickly, as

12 Marge said we do not at this point. Sometimes when we
go

13 into a middle school, and this was my particular task, we

14 take a look at the facility, and we take a look at

15 capacity, in some districts we have found that the

16 capacity of the school might be under capacity

17 sufficiently so that there might be a possibility of

18 moving a grade, and that would have, meaning grade
five,

19 and that would have a ripple effect and obviously take

20 some pressure off of the elementary schools, however,

21 that is not the case here. Both middle schools are close
22 to capacity, and so, therefore, we were unable to really
23 move forward with any option here.

24 MR. HIGGINS: I just had one other comment
25 about Option 3, one thing that isn't here it's sort of

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1 stated is the lack, with kids only there for two or three
2 years you start losing some of the ownership of the
3 schools in the community, and it hurts volunteerism, and
4 also just, kids don't feel like it's their school as

5 much.

6 MR. JOHN KENNEDY: I think we understand

7 that. We listed that as a disadvantage that would have

8 to be addressed, and as Marge just mentioned, there are

9 districts that make a concerted effort along those lines

10 to reestablish the identity. They work very hard with

11 the parents and with the students to do so, but you're

12 absolutely correct that it's an issue that would have to

13 be addressed. Thank you.

14 MS. CLARKE: Over to this side.

15 MS. CZIRJAK: My name is Liane Czirjak. I'm

16 with the North Cumberland Middle School PTO. We met

with

17 you before. And I'm actually going to piggyback on
18 something that Shannon Spurlock said. I also was very
19 curious about the money savings. You did such a great
20 job of putting together the advantages or disadvantages
21 of each option, and then you did make the statement of,
22 okay, the largest estimated cost savings would be in
23 Option 3, and I of course would be very interested so
you
24 have already addressed that. I just wanted to piggyback
25 on that. With that comes your considerations with all

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1 options at the end when you have given a couple of
2 recommendations which are, you know, lower
thermostat,
3 review the custodial services, cut back on the nighttime
4 and weekend, and I would just like to make a note that
5 being with PTO we, that is when we use the school, and
6 it's an incredible bonding time for parents and kids so
7 that if the recommendation is to cut back or to start
8 charging a lot more for extracurricular time in school,
9 some of our ways to build up some parent participation
10 will really be hurt. I just wanted to throw that into
11 the pot, and then in terms of long-term considerations,
12 do you have any standards for you're saying increase
the

13 technology and addressing capital improvements, what
kind

14 of standards can we look at for other schools around the
15 country in terms of technology that's available in the
16 classrooms at various levels, elementary as well as the
17 middle school?

18 MR. DONALD KENNEDY: There are national
19 organizations. It would take me, you know, an hour to
20 answer your question, but we can make reference to that
21 in the final report, but there are national organizations
22 which have standards, and your high school, in fact, in
23 its renovation has gotten some additional technology.
24 The counterparts of which would be nice to have in the

25 K-8 schools, so you have got a lot of it in the high

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**1 school, and we're just seeing less at the elementary and
2 middle school level than we frequently see in other
3 places.**

**4 MR. JOHN KENNEDY: And just following up on
5 that, at the middle schools typically we would see access
6 for students either through what they call a sign-out lab
7 or in many instances an instructional lab plus three or
8 four computers within the classroom itself so that**

9 students can be working on those during project time,
and

10 it also provides additional support for the students to

11 be able to have access to computer programming which

12 reinforces some of the core curriculum. So, as we go

13 from school to school oftentimes, I think it's become

14 more the norm that there are these what we consider to
be

15 the sign-out labs. In the libraries at the middle school

16 we are finding six to eight computers available where the

17 norm now is closer to 25 or 26 as we go from place to

18 place. That way a teacher can bring a class into the

19 library, use the library resources and then also have the

20 students working on a computer, so I think that long
term

21 that certainly would be a reasonable goal for the
22 district.

23 MS. CZIRJAK: Okay.

24 MS. CLARKE: I just want to speak to the
25 elementary school. Also, even though we don't think of

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1 young children as being able to access technology, I
have
2 seen some amazing use of technology from, with some
3 special needs student that have, you know, special input

4 devices, and so forth. I have seen, in early childhood
5 buildings I have seen learning centers that are
6 technology based that are age appropriate, you know, for
7 that, that age student all the way up through fifth grade
8 where you might have some, there might be some
9 reinforcement or it might be some extensions with some
10 challenge activities that, if you have sufficient
11 technology in the classrooms, which I did not see at the
12 elementary level here in Cumberland. And some school
13 systems have computer labs at the elementary level. I
14 did not see rooms dedicated to technology, but I did not
15 take off rooms to make computer labs because part of
16 transition with those districts that have computer labs

the

17 at the elementary level are going through is more of
18 these laptop cards where they can move them in. They
19 have multiple laptop cards, and I know there are some in
20 the district, but they have enough airport wireless
21 technology, and another aspect that doesn't affect the
22 student hands-on aspect but the data processing with all
23 of the collection of data that we're doing for RTI and
24 intervening for students, there is a lot of input that
25 can be done through technology and then it can really

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1 assist the teacher in looking at the data and seeing
2 where the gains have been made and where the shortfall
3 is. So there is a lot to this whole technology piece
4 that involves students as well as the entire educational
5 sect.

6 MS. CZIRJAK: And when we say technology are
7 we only talking about laptops or computers or does that
8 include science equipment and things like that, because
9 we haven't said those words, so?

10 MS. CLARKE: Yeah, technology is a huge
11 term, maybe we should come up with a better, we're not
12 just talking about computers, we're talking about Smart
13 Boards, and we're talking about wireless networks, we

are

14 talking about libraries where not only can a student
15 access information through books, but they have access
16 to, obviously with a filter and all kinds of special
17 oversight so the students are only accessing sites that
18 are appropriate for their research, but that, yes, we are
19 talking about everything that's out there, and things
20 that probably we don't even know about that are coming
21 down the road.

22 MS. CZIRJAK: Okay, and so I forgot to
23 mention, so if we are saving money, the only thing we
24 didn't talk about was cutting out paper, a lot of paper
25 and postage, and then also basically any considerations

1 for going green and solar energy, or rain barrels, I mean
2 to name something ridiculous.

3 MS. CLARKE: I have seen them in schools,
4 and it's amazing what the children have benefited from
5 measuring it and seeing how much they can actually
6 collect, and I visited a school not too long ago where
7 they had the rain barrels, and they also had an
8 after-school gardening club, this is at the elementary
9 level believe it or not, and they were using water from

10 the rain barrels to irrigate some of the plants that they
11 had put in. So, thank you. Thank you. Thank you very
12 much for your input.

13 MR. MCCLAUGHLIN: Yes, Jim McClaughlin, I'd
14 just like to comment on your recommendations.
Basically,

15 I'm a little bit confused when I say that, you know, your
16 recommendations are a little bit disturbing, to say the
17 least, and my concern is, okay, the other part of the
18 equation which would be finance, you know, finances
19 through the state, okay. My understanding, okay, at the
20 conclusion of the general assembly, before they were
21 convening, they have a \$10 million, there was \$14 million
22 dollars added to the fair funding formula, all right, and

23 my understanding is that every year there is going to be
24 money added on, okay. Also capital improvements, I
25 believe it was Representative Wharton got up and they

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1 have add-ons, additional monies available, all right, for
2 capital improvements. They will match dollar for dollar.
3 Are you people aware of this?

4 MR. MUTTER: Can I interject for a minute?

5 These are just options. There are no recommendations.

6 MR. MCLAUGHLIN: I understand that.

7 **MR. MUTTER: Well, you used the word**

8 **recommendations, I just wanted to clarify. These are**

9 **options. This committee held public meetings and**

10 **developed the request for proposal, and they're basically**

11 **doing what they were directed to do and at that time they**

12 **were clear that they were presenting options, so these**

13 **are not recommendations they're representing options to**

14 **the committee and to the public, and then we are going**

to

15 **move from them, and the other thing about the fair**

16 **funding, I believe what Mr. Kennedy said was that the, if**

17 **you were going to look at our expense curb it outpaces**

18 **our revenue curb, even if you include the introduction of**

19 the new funds from the federal funding formula.

20 MR. MCLAUGHLIN: It is my understanding

21 Chairman Constantino (phonetic) has reassured, you
know,

22 members of the general assembly in reference to the fair

23 funding formula, okay, that there are additional add-on

24 monies, you know, for capital improvement, okay, for

25 special needs. I have to get a better understanding of

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1 this, the money equation, you know, and it'll be coming

2 up this year at the general assembly. Hopefully the

3 economic climate won't be that great.

4 MR. MUTTER: But for the purposes of this
5 meeting that really is beyond their scope. That was not,
6 it went beyond that.

7 MR. MCLAUGHLIN: That's basically what I was
8 referring to. Okay, the other part of the equation, the
9 money aspect. Thank you.

10 MS. CLARKE: Thank you. I don't see anybody
11 over, are you ready? All right. Well, I didn't see you
12 standing up, I'm sorry. Let her go, and then we'll come
13 back.

14 MS. FOGELL: Hi, my name is Tina Fogell. I
15 have two students at Community. I had a request and

then

16 a question. My request was that it be made available
17 what information NESDEC was provided as far as written
18 material regarding what reports when you received the
19 Torrado report, any other reports or written material
20 that NESDEC received prior to or during the course of
21 their investigation, and my question is that Options 2
22 and 3 are not something that any of us have not heard
23 before, and when you make Option, when you present
24 Options 2 and 3, is there any assumption as to which
25 school would be the early learning center, and how the

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1 schools would be grouped, because I think that in order
2 to get true dialogue before your final report comes out,
3 I think it's important, at least as parents, for us to
4 understand specifics, and how many students will be
5 impacted and things like that, because I think it's
6 difficult for us to talk in this general term of what, we
7 have five schools, one will be, let's call it an early
8 learning center or pre-K through K, and then the four
9 remaining will either be one through four or paired,
10 however you pair them, but I think in order to get a true
11 dialogue and truly understand what the public's reaction

12 would be to that we would maybe need some more
specifics

13 as to which school would you determine would be the
early

14 learning center, how would you pair the other elementary

15 schools, and data such as that, so I think since this is

16 supposed to be the best use of our facilities, I think

17 the options that you have presented are all something

18 that, are that I think everyone here in this room

19 expected, but I think the practical implications of how

20 we would actually go forward is what we're looking for in

21 order to have a dialogue, so I don't know if that's

22 really a question or really a statement, but I guess I'm

23 asking if you have already done that data if you could

24 say to us today, well, in our options we determine that X
25 school would be the early learning center, or --

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1 **MS. CLARKE:** Well, we haven't gotten that
2 specific in our options, but because of the requirement
3 for early childhood, the early childhood building if you
4 were to go with Option 2 or 3 also to being a one-story
5 building because the kindergartners won't be allowed to
6 go above the first floor, nor would preschoolers, so
7 there are only two schools that could be considered for

8 early childhood if you were to go to Option 2 or 3, and
9 that would be Ashton or Cumberland Hill. Those are the
10 two schools that could be considered. Their geographic
11 location, bussing, number of, you know, students, there
12 are many factors that were not a part of our study as far
13 as where the population is coming, you know. We know
14 many students, but we don't know necessarily where
15 live, or you know, if one would be more desirable. I was
16 told that in the spring proposal Ashton was named as
17 early childhood building because of its location. It was
18 more centrally located, but as I'm speaking, there might
19 be other reasons for another location to be selected, and

how

they

the

20 that would be beyond our purview but would have to be
one

21 of those two schools, and then as far as the paired

22 schools, you would have two larger schools, and you
have

23 two smaller schools, and as I was saying earlier, that

24 you would have to have three grade levels in the larger

25 of the four schools, and you would have to have the two

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1 grade levels in the smaller of the two schools, and the

2 geography does play a, have an influence on what is the

3 most the geographically sensible, because
transportation,

4 you know, miles cost money, when you have to transport
5 students from one place to another, and we are visitors
6 to this community, I did visit all of the schools and
7 some of the schools take quite a bit of time to get from
8 school A to school B, and some of them are much closer,
9 so I know there was a previous recommendation, but it
10 would have to be a bigger school and smaller school,
and
11 then there are financial factors and bussing that would
12 have to be considered.

13 MS. FOGELL: So NESDEC wasn't charged with
14 saying these are the options and this is how we would

15 implement it. You're only charged with coming up with
16 the options?

17 **MS. CLARKE:** For this point, and this is as
18 far as this particular study, sometimes we have follow-up
19 on studies that include transportation redistricting and
20 other things, but that was not our charge for this
21 particular study.

22 **MS. REED:** Karen Berard-Reed. I'm an Ashton
23 parent. My question actually isn't about money because

24 was under the understanding that this was a best
25 educational use of facilities study, and I'm a little

1 saddened and frustrated that we're not hearing more
about

2 that, and I appreciate Mr. Mutter's question about the

3 review of literature. I'm kind of sad that that's not

4 here with this process, because it leads me to believe

5 that the review of literature is going to be used to

6 support a position rather than guide this process; is

7 that accurate?

8 MR. DONALD KENNEDY: No.

9 MS. CLARKE: Do you want to speak?

10 MR. DONALD KENNEDY: No, we do studies like

11 this all the time, and we can't do everything at once,

12 and providing literature is something that we have
agreed

13 to do by the end of the process, but we discuss which

14 studies we have talked about, we have all read them, we

15 have things at our library at the office. We belong to

16 the educational research service, so we're getting

17 bulletins constantly from them. So, no, it isn't

18 something that's an afterthought. It's been an integral

19 part of our thinking, and all three of us have been

20 involved in education for 40 years, so we have been

21 living this for a long, long time, but, and I apologize,

22 we apologize for having to talk at all about money, but

23 if we said zero about money --

24 MS. REED: I understand the reason for

25 talking about money.

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1 MR. DENNIS: If we only talked about the

2 education side, and then we leave, and you discover a

3 week or two later that Cumberland, like every other

4 district is going to face the worst budget discussion

5 series of years, you know, over the next two or three

6 years, someone could legitimately say, well, why didn't,

7 if NESDEC knew about that why didn't they tell us.

8 Anyway, that's why --

9 MS. REED: That's not really my question. I

10 obviously understand the financial climate right now, but

11 I think that historically speaking with all of the

12 conversations that took place last year, definitely a

13 piece that was lacking I think would have perhaps put us

14 forward in the discussions a lot more was this concept
of

15 knowing what support we have for the decisions that are

16 educationally sound or not educationally sound, and it

17 would have been really valuable to see that here rather

18 than in the final report so that we have a chance to

19 digest it. I mean, you can say you find one report that

20 says one thing, you can find another one that goes
21 against it, but the reality is there is good research and
22 there is not-so-good research, and if we have an
23 opportunity to filter through that before the final
24 report that would be valuable.

25 MR. DONALD KENNEDY: Good point.

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1 MS. REED: Just one other, Tina actually
2 asked the question I was going to ask, too. In the
3 spirit of brainstorming, and you're asking for ideas that

4 no one has discussed, and I realize this may be outside
5 of the scope of your RFP, we are talking about shifting
6 grades and schools and that kind of thing, I wonder if
7 there is rooms in the high school or in the transitional
8 building for grade eight in doing that kind of shift, and
9 I know that might be an unpopular thought but looking at
10 all options.

11 MR. JOHN KENNEDY: Well, that was not
12 actually a piece of our study. It was not part of what
13 we were asked to look into. That is, we have found that
14 to be a possibility in some districts that we have
15 travelled to, and depending on space availability
16 obviously that is something that a community might

want

17 to consider. I think it is important just sort of a
18 follow-up, I think that might be considered thinking out
19 of the box a little bit or doing something a little bit
20 different, but what I think it's important for everybody
21 to understand is that as we travel through the focus
22 groups, at least what I have heard from people, was I
23 asked a question near the end, and I said what situation
24 do you think would bring the district to the tipping
25 point with regard to class size, and remembering now

that

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1 at the middle school class sizes are ranging 27, 28, 29,

2 and at the elementary school class sizes are in many

3 cases up around 25, and as I listen to people respond,

4 the general response that I heard was we're at the

5 tipping point, and so what we're trying to do, and what

6 the administration asked us to do is to try, and the

7 school, is to try to provide some options for the

8 district to think about for the community to think about

9 because the outcome may be one that would cause the

10 district to move beyond the tipping point with regard to

11 class size, and so that is something that, what we
wanted

12 to try to do was present some options that might, in
some

13 way or another, mitigate that, and we wanted to provide
14 an opportunity for people to think about it.

15 MS. REED: I'm not sure if that was in
16 response to my comment but --

17 MR. JOHN KENNEDY: I don't think it was, but
18 I think it's important to get that out there, because
19 when we are talking about any of these issues they all
20 are affected by --

21 MS. REED: I don't think you're in a
22 situation where people don't understand the
comprehensive
23 nature of this issue.

24 MR. JOHN KENNEDY: Thank you.

25 MS. CLARKE: And earlier in the presentation

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1 I did refer, after John was finished talking about the

2 middle school, that because the middle school is at

3 capacity, and because the five elementary schools, no

4 matter how you configure them, you need all of those

5 classrooms to meet the needs of the current population

6 and the population that we have projected, you know,
over

7 the next ten plus years, so, you know, it's not that you

8 can close a school, and there is no room at the middle
9 school, and our study did not include the high school.

10 So, we can't move the fifth grade up, so we're

11 disappointed we didn't come up with some, you know,
wow

12 ideas either, but that's the best we could do with the

13 facilities you have and the number of students that you

14 have. Thank you.

15 MS. COPANS: My name is Jennifer Copans, and

16 my oldest son is at Community now in second grade, so
my

17 knowledge as far as other schools or older classrooms I

18 don't have it, so I'm going to ask some questions

19 regarding what I do know, and that is the importance of

20 parental involvement within the classrooms, and with the
21 future budget constraints I think that parental
22 involvement, which is free, is even more valuable, and
23 did you consider that if we were to separate schools. I
24 know just with a preschooler and a second grader it's
25 hard sometimes to schedule volunteers within a
classroom

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1 and be both places at once, and if the school is
2 separated into Option 3, let's say, then your free

3 resources will be limited and you will lose those, and we
4 don't have teacher assistance, and we don't have things
5 like that in the classrooms, and you might take away this
6 free resource with the parents being involved in the
7 classrooms. I know in our school we need, this year we
8 are coming in one hour a day, a parent in my, our
9 classrooms, my son's classroom. That might go away if I
10 have to then split my time between two schools.

11 MS. CLARKE: We did allude to the fact that
12 parents would be spread thinner not only regarding
13 transportation if they dropped their children off, and we
14 alluded to driveway situations where there might be
15 limited driveway space, and there would certainly be an

16 impact that there would be twice as many parents to
draw
17 upon, and that's where the sort of regrouping, the
18 volunteers need to regroup because you would have
twice
19 as many second-grade parents at one school, and twice
as
20 many fifth-grade parents at another school, so it is
21 possible to continue to utilize twice as many volunteers
22 to continue to do some of the same things today, but
you
23 do have to regroup in order for that to happen.

24 MS. COPANS: I'm not even talking about
25 extra activity. I'm talking about within the school day

1 for parents to come in within the school day, if you
2 still have the same number of students then you won't
3 need one volunteer for that group, second grade. I
4 understand what you're saying, but you still, you might
5 have twice as many parents, but those parents will be
6 divided up between the schools, and you still have the
7 same number of students, so even if you have all of the
8 second graders in one area or the third, or whatever, you
9 still need help for 50 students. It is not now 25
10 because they're all together.

11 MS. CLARKE: It is different, and we
12 understand that that is a factor, but there are twice as
13 many adults and the, I guess the biggest concern I had
14 heard from parents when I was assistant principal, and
15 you know we became paired with another school, was
that
16 they were just as busy as ever, but they had to travel.
17 They couldn't just go to one site and be with both
18 classes if they had a second grader and a fifth grader.
19 They had to take a trip in order to get to the second
20 location, but it did not, there was not a decline in my
21 own experience in the parents volunteerism or in the
22 generosity of the parent groups, it just required some
23 orchestration.

24 **MS. COPANS:** And my second question is you
25 spoke about if there were sister schools and finding time

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1 to transition or if they meet together and to have that
2 sisterhood, or whatever. My concern that there is such a
3 short amount of time to get in all of the learning
4 materials you need within a day it seems, from 9:00 to
5 3:00, or whatever it is, how would you find time then?
6 How do you consider time to be able to do these extra
7 things if there is not enough time already within the day

8 to do what is required for educational --

9 MS. CLARKE: There again you have to think

10 out of the box. In some of the districts that we're

11 familiar with not all of that transition has to take

12 place during the school day, you know, there are other

13 events that can be a Saturday event where the students

14 visit the school and the parents come, or they have an

15 ice cream social that includes both schools. The parents

16 are crucial to the success of any change, whether it's

17 this change or something else in making it go smoothly.

18 MS. COPANS: Those are my concerns. Thank

19 you.

20 MS. CLARKE: Thank you. Parents are very,

21 very important to the school's success.

22 MS. BURKE: Hi, my name is Sheryl Burke, and

23 I am a parent of a second grader at Cumberland Hill. I

24 wanted your feedback a little bit on Mrs. Lambert's

25 remarks regarding the divide of our town. I think that's

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1 something that's trying to be fixed, but I think you need

2 to understand coming in here. I am amazed at the divide

3 of our 295 highway, and piggybacking on that I know that

4 the high school was not included in this study, but was

5 there a visit to the high school in order to see our
6 current setup, what our outcome is?

7 **MS. CLARKE:** We did not officially visit the
8 high school. We have all visited the high school because
9 the superintendent's office is there, and we had meetings
10 here last week, but we did not have a, any kind of
11 official visit to the high school.

12 **MS. BURKE:** And my last question would be
13 regardless of the money, which I know is important, if
14 that wasn't an issue, and in your professional opinion,
15 what is the best setup for kindergartners, elementary
16 school, middle school to provide them the best schools
17 looking at our town? If weren't talking money, I'm just

18 saying, because that would be, that's what we want to
19 strive towards.

20 MS. CLARKE: You want me to answer that? If
21 my dream were to come true, and having been an early
22 childhood principal I would love to see a brand-new state
23 of the art early childhood center for this community and
24 many other communities that I have visited, but that is
25 not, that is really pie in the sky right now, and we have

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1 to be realistic about what's possible, and I guess the

2 other piece of it is that there are five schools that are
3 operating and I visited, I see children having, you know,
4 good educational experiences. I see hard working
5 teachers. I see dedicated principals, support staff, and
6 I see good things happening, and you can't throw away a
7 school because you'd like to have a new one.

8 MS. BURKE: Oh, no, I didn't say that.

9 MS. CLARKE: I have seen some unbelievable
10 early childhood buildings that have been built for that
11 purpose, so I would dream that every community would
have
12 that.

13 MS. BURKE: That would be the dream, which

14 is to establish another --

15 MS. CLARKE: Someone else may have another
16 dream, but that's my dream.

17 MS. BURKE: I guess what I'm asking is what
18 do they say is the best for kids? Is it K-5? Is it K-2,
19 and 3-5 or --

20 MR. DONALD KENNEDY: I'm thrilled that you
21 are asking that question. The research literature says
22 that lots of different things can work, and as we go into
23 different communities we see places that have early
24 childhood centers that are really good, we go to the next
25 community, and we find that everyone has got a

1 neighborhood school and that works really well. Usually
2 the preschoolers are in a different space. They may be
3 in a unique location, or they may be in an elementary
4 school, but the kindergartners may be in their own,
5 quote, neighborhood school. We also go to places that
6 have schools that are designed by grade groupings, and
7 they do that intentionally because they want as many
8 children or maybe even all the children of the community
9 to be at the same schools if they're at the same age
10 level, so they'll know each other, and they do it in age

11 level groupings, and those work. So I think the answer

12 is there isn't any magic silver bullet, and it has a lot

13 to do with the values of the community, the
neighborhood

14 of the community, the tradition of the community, and

15 what the community can afford at any given time,
because

16 you're not starting a brand new sort of the Disney World

17 community like, what's the name, presentation is that the

18 name of it?

19 MS. BURKE: Celebration.

20 MR. DONALD KENNEDY: Celebration, you're not

21 starting a brand-new community. You're picking up life

22 in one that already exists, and the research literature

23 reflects the fact that you can make it work in many
24 different ways, so there really isn't any magic bullet
25 out there.

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1 **MS. BURKE: Thank you.**

2 **MS. CLARKE: Over here. Thank you,**

3 **MS. LANGTON: Hi, my name is Kathy Langton.**

4 **I have a fifth grader at Community School. I have a**

5 **question, and then I have a comment. My question**

6 **revolves around your capacity numbers. In 2001 the**

7 district paid for what is commonly referred to as the
8 Torrado Report which is basically a space utilization
9 evaluation of all of the schools. Your capacity numbers
10 are significantly different than the numbers in the

11 Torrado Report, which I have a copy with me here
tonight.

12 It's like my Bible. We haven't taken away classroom

13 space since 2001. In fact, we have added classroom
space

14 at McCourt Middle School based on that report. The
high

15 school renovations that were done were based on that

16 report, and Cumberland's long range planning process
were

17 based on that report. Can you explain to me why your

18 capacity numbers, I have gone through each school and
19 done a comparison, even at your 85 percent utilization
20 rate you're still drastically different?

21 MS. CLARKE: You want to speak to the
22 Torrado Report?

23 MS. LANGTON: And then I have a comment
24 after, too.

25 MR. DONALD KENNEDY: We get asked this kind

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1 of question in a lot of communities because frequently

2 they will have had some earlier study, sometimes done
by
3 an educational firm, sometimes done by an architectural
4 firm, and we will come up with a set of numbers, and our
5 numbers may be higher, they may be lower, whatever,
than
6 an earlier study. Our calculations are done entirely
7 based on the current and future educational program.
We
8 don't know what the program was or what was told to
9 Torrado, and so my guess would be, and we haven't tried
10 to reconcile our numbers with those numbers. We are
11 aware of the report, we were made, we had available all
12 kinds of public information from the website, and other
13 reports, but my suspicion would be because it's been

true

14 in other places where we have tried to reconcile our
15 numbers that the differences were entirely in relation to
16 education programs that we considered things in
17 educational programs that weren't considered by the
18 previous study, or the program had been changed, and
the
19 information wasn't given to the previous study, because
20 either it wasn't then known or it hasn't yet been
21 decided, so it all has to do, the differences would have
22 to do with the educational program.

23 MS. LANGTON: Because just looking at the

24 North Cumberland Middle School numbers, you have
almost a

25 200-student difference, based on that 85 percent

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1 utilization and if you look at that report, they actually
2 go through every school in Cumberland, classroom by
3 classroom, identifying what the use is planned for, what
4 the use was currently at that time being utilized for,
5 capacity numbers, square footage. It just seems to me, I
6 could see if the numbers were off, I even took out,
7 because they estimated, they used numbers for an art
8 room, music room, and band room. I took those numbers

9 out, and your numbers are still like a hundred kids off,
10 so that to me is a big difference.

11 MS. CLARKE: I just want to make one other
12 comment. I'm not sure exactly at the elementary schools
13 when programs were instituted or when the population
of
14 the community required a specific needs classroom, for
15 instance, for children with behavioral needs or children
16 with, on the autism, you know, spectrum or children with
17 ELL needs, I'm not sure exactly, I don't have the history
18 that tells me when, when the point came that there
needed
19 to be a program for those students, but when I visited
20 the schools and go with the principal, if those programs

21 are there, we assume that those programs are going to
be,
22 continue to be needed. We don't know if they're going to
23 need two classrooms, you know, ten years from now, or
if
24 there will be a decline in the number of students with
25 that particular profile, or an increase, so we as Don

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1 said, we go with what we know at the time of the study,
2 and we do not use square footage beyond the point of
3 saying this space is inadequate to be used as a regular

4 size classroom, and if I run into a space that really is

5 a conference size space, and it's been used as a

6 classroom, I would say that that really can't
accommodate

7 a full classroom of students, and I would adjust the

8 numbers for that classrooms, or I would say it would be

9 better served as a conference room or a social work area

10 or some other use, but we do not look at the

11 architectural rendering and just count the number of

12 spaces that the building was designed for, because that

13 is not the way the buildings are being used today
because

14 programs have changed so much.

15 MS. LANGTON: So in your final report will

16 you have a listing by school of classrooms and what
17 they're currently being utilized for?

18 **MS. CLARKE:** There will be, it will be part,
19 at the end we do a facility profile, and that would be
20 included as sort of an addendum, it tells you how many
21 classrooms, which I have already listed for you, but it
22 also lists whether there is a room for the psychologist,
23 whether it's a regular size room or a small size room,
24 resource room, special needs classrooms and so forth,
so,
25 yes, there will be a sheet of that nature for all of the

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1 schools we visited which would be all five elementary
and

2 two middle.

3 MR. LANGTON: Then I just have a comment.

4 One of the things that you keep saying is we're at a

5 tipping point in terms of enrollment. Three years ago we

6 went through a very similar process during special

7 utilization committee group that was an internal group,

8 and I know that number of the people in this room were

9 here during that process. At that point we kept hearing

10 then about overcrowding in the schools, and that

11 enrollment was going to continue to grow and grow
because

12 of new building in Cumberland. Well, I'm looking at your
13 numbers, I don't have my exact numbers from three
years
14 ago, because I didn't bring that notebook, but three
15 years North Cumberland Middle School was up over 700
16 kids, right now their enrollment is 628, so we're down in
17 three years 72 kids, so I guess my observation is all
18 your enrollment numbers show we are continuing to
have a
19 declining enrollment. So three years ago we heard we
are
20 at a tipping point. The numbers are increasing. We
21 don't have room. Here we are three years later,
22 enrollment has actually declined, and it's projected to

23 continue to go down, yet I'm hearing the same thing just
24 from a different group of people that we're at a tipping
25 point, so sometimes, I get that we have inequities in our

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1 school and that something needs to be done, but every
2 time I hear the word tipping point I feel like we're
3 Chicken Little and the sky is falling, because we heard
4 it three years ago that enrollment is increasing, and it
5 hasn't, it's gone down in the last three years. So I

6 just hope whatever decisions we make we take into
account

7 the best needs for our children, and things that make
8 sense, and not just a superfluous, well, we're at a
9 tipping point. They need to be concrete fact-based
10 decisions. And that's all I got.

11 MS. CLARKE: Thank you.

12 MS. SNODGRASS: My name is Pam
13 Snodgrass-Belt. I have a second grader at Community
14 School. I have a couple of comments. I think it was
15 Sherry that asked you as educators what you think the
16 best program is. We all heard that there is three
17 options, we could combine schools, we have got the
sister
18 schools. That's not new to us. There is definitely a

19 bias of Option 3 as far as being cost savings, but what
20 we want to know and what I don't really see in our
21 advantages and disadvantages is the capturing of what it
22 means to the kids. We know when you say that we're
going
23 to have to lay off staff, we love our teachers, and we
24 don't want them to be fired or layoff, so Option 3 sounds
25 like there is a bias towards that because it keeps more

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1 teachers, but at the same time does that actually provide
2 a benefit for our students, do kids do better in schools

3 that are split up like that? Are you better in a K-8?

4 And I think that's kind of what I would like to see

5 captured in what the advantages are for the programs.

6 The staffing, putting all of the curriculum in the same

7 library, I get that. I'm not an ignorant person, but at

8 the same time I would like to know what benefits do the

9 students get from that. Does it really make a difference

10 in their education? I think that kids like to be around

11 kids that are older and see where they're developing. I

12 would have two kids that are no longer together in the

13 same school if we go to this kind of system. My
daughter

14 won't go to school with her big sister. And that's part

15 of the excitement of going to school, you're in the same
16 school with your sister. I'm not saying that that
17 outweighs getting a better education. I'm just saying
18 that I want to know what the advantages are

19 educationwise, not just what the advantages are
costwise.

20 MS. CLARKE: I think that Don did allude to
21 the fact that this isn't one program that's best, and we
22 go around all over New England, and we have seen fine
23 programs that work in multiple ways. There are
24 trade-offs. There are advantages. There is pluses and
25 there are minuses.

1 **MS. SNODGRASS-BELT:** That's what I think
2 **would be nice to see captured a little bit more in your**
3 **proposing costs.**

4 **MS. CLARKE:** We'll expand upon those.

5 **MS. SNODGRASS-BELT:** Also, you mention that
6 **full-day kindergarten is a huge advantage to kids, so I**
7 **was wondering that that's something that we could**
capture
8 **as well going forward.**

9 **MS. CLARKE:** Because it was a long-range
10 **option you will see that under the long-term**

11 considerations. It is listed there.

12 MR. DONALD-KENNEDY: Eight rooms.

13 MS. SNODGRASS-BELT: So if you go from a
14 pre-K, pre-K kindergarten, would full-day kindergarten
15 come with that?

16 MS. CLARKE: Number one, you have to hire
17 twice as many teachers, and number two, there is not
18 space at either of the one level elementary schools, the
19 way they are currently configured is there space for that
20 many students plus the early childhood pre-K programs.

21 MS. SNODGRASS-BELT: So are there plans,

22 like, maybe we would close some of the schools, we
have

23 to rent a bigger school or have other options on the

24 table like that?

25 MS. CLARKE: Right now all of your students

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1 will fit in the five schools that you have.

2 MS. SNODGRASS-BELT: That's what I'm asking

3 for, just more options.

4 MS. CLARKE: That's why the long-term

5 consideration because it costs, the cost has to be, you

6 know, a building program, there has to be funding and so

7 forth, and most states, in most states, and Rhode Island

8 is no exception, if there are sufficient spaces in the
9 existing schools they will not fund a new school. So,
10 this is an issue when you're talking, that's why we talk
11 long term.

12 MS. SNODGRASS-BELT: So if that was one of
13 our goals was to do full-day kindergarten then we could
14 say there is not enough space and build another school.

15 MS. CLARKE: Or expand the schools. If you
16 had your current configuration, every school would need
17 to have additional space added on. Some of the existing
18 schools have kindergarten rooms that were either built
19 for kindergarten or were used historically for

20 kindergarten in the past. Some of those rooms have

been,

21 are now utilized for special programming, so if you had
22 the current configuration that you have right now, you
23 know it might be that the decision would be to utilize
24 the spaces that were designed for kindergarten and build
25 additional space so that you have state-of-the-art spaces

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1 for the additional students that require special
2 consideration. If you had made some other decisions
down
3 the road, you know, for instance, you had designated one

4 of your elementary schools as an early childhood center
5 you would have to renovate or expand that building
6 depending on what the requirements were at that time.

7 MS. SNODGRASS-BELT: Could that be captured
8 in the options, like there would be a benefit to going
9 towards having one school be a kindergarten school if
10 it's easier to expand one school as opposed to five
11 schools.

12 MS. CLARKE: I think I did actually put it
13 down as a down the road type of thing if you had an
early
14 childhood school that it could be renovated and
expanded
15 to go to full-day kindergarten, that would be one of the,

16 it could be an advantage to already being in that
17 circumstance, but I don't believe that most states,
18 including Rhode Island, would build a new building if
you
19 actually only needed to add to a building or expand the
20 existing spaces that you have, but it's usually less
21 expensive to build an addition on one building than it is
22 to add additions to five buildings, so I mean that's, I
23 guess it's common sense, but one of the things that
24 sometimes comes with additions is that can you also do
25 renovations on the site. It doesn't usually cost as much

1 because you have already got, you know, everybody is
2 there, and you're ordering tiles, or whatever, and you
3 can, you know, do some improvements while you're at,
4 without having to cost as much, so there are some
5 long-term advantages to going to an early childhood
6 setting even if you can't provide full-day K to start.

7 **MS. SNODGRASS-BELT:** Gotcha, and my last

8 comment is have you ever seen anything, you were
saying

9 like Aquidneck is combining school districts.

10 **MS. CLARKE:** They're talking about it. They

11 haven't decided that.

12 **MS. SNODGRASS-BELT:** Is there anything
13 outside the box like sharing administrations or working
14 with other towns to do like benefit plans or things like
15 that that you have seen work successfully in order to try
16 to save money?

17 **MS. CLARKE:** We have seen some interesting
18 things over the years, and one of the biggest costs are
19 the health care benefits, and we have seen some
20 regionalization work in more than one place that has
made
21 a huge difference to, you know, the compensation cost
in
22 the district, so that's something that, you know, we can
23 add to the list of possible savings.

24 **MS. SNODGRASS-BELT:** Like the lights and
25 turning down the heat, are there things like that that

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1 are much bigger and outside the box that we should be
2 thinking about?

3 **MS. CLARKE:** That's possible. Maybe we can
4 add that. Thank you. I appreciate it. Is there anyone
5 over here, over here? All right.

6 **MS. TONCELLI:** Good evening, my name is
7 Rachel Toncelli, and I'm an Ashton parent to a

8 kindergartner, a first, and second grader.

9 MS. CLARKE: Oh, wow.

10 MS. TONCELLI: My question is in addition to

11 the review of literature have you consulted with other

12 local communities, and I'm specifically thinking about

13 North Kingstown, Rhode Island. About five or six years

14 ago they restructured their elementary schools to do

15 something that looked a lot like Option 3, and they

16 recently decided to undo that decision, and I spoke to

17 Dr. Norton, who's superintendent of schools there, and

18 essentially gave three reasons. One of them you list as

19 an advantage, and they found it to be a disadvantage,

he

the

20 other you list as a disadvantage, and the other one I
21 don't see, I don't think I have seen. The first is you
22 list as an advantage that Option 3 would provide
23 increased opportunity for greater grade levels,
24 horizontal and vertical cooperation, and North
25 Kingstown's actual experience was that there was less

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1 vertical cooperation at the drop-offs from the grades,
2 for example, if the schools were split from first to the
3 third and then fourth to fifth that there was less

4 communication and understanding of the curriculum
from

5 third grade to fourth grade, and that there was a, a

6 related drop off in scores because of that. I see that

7 listed as an advantage, and I think that maybe it's more

8 nuanced than that, maybe it's horizontally advantageous

9 --

10 MS. CLARKE: But not vertical.

11 MS. TONCELLI: And I would like to see more

12 detail on that. The other thing you listed as a

13 disadvantage that it would require PTOs to regroup as

14 children attend different schools. North Kingstown's

15 experience was that the restructuring of schools was

16 actually so crippling to PTOs so we can certainly talk
17 about it would be great to do this and great to do that,
18 we could get all this communication with parents. The
19 experience was that it completely fractured the PTO and
20 not having the PTO was such a problem that it was
21 important to go back to an older model.

22 MS. CLARKE: It was a huge disadvantage.

23 MS. TONCELLI: They did have something like
24 Option 3, and they went back, so I think their experience
25 is interesting for you to look at, if you haven't

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1 already.

2 MS. CLARKE: Yes, thank you.

3 MS. TONCELLI: And then the third point

4 which I don't see listed, unless I missed it, is that

5 when I spoke to Dr. Norton he mentioned that the
students

6 did benefit a lot from their older peers, and not having

7 them in the same facility as role models was detrimental

8 to the kids. So those were three things that jumped into

9 my mind tonight that I remember from my conversation
that

10 I had with him in February, and if I haven't already I

11 think it would be valuable to speak to local communities

12 that have had --

13 MS. CLARKE: Thank you. I appreciate you

14 sharing in your last research. Is there anyone over

15 here?

16 MS. ROCK: Hi, I'm Cheryl Rock. I was at

17 the Ashton NESDEC meeting. I'm in the SIT committee
and

18 volunteer all the time. One thing that it's been, I have

19 been keeping in the back of my mind was that if Ashton

20 School is one of the two, the other being Cumberland

21 Hill, that would be eligible for the pre-K-K, I don't

22 know if you're aware of this or not, but we still have an

23 outstanding for the next 15 years or so, a brand new gym

24 that we'll be paying for for the next 15 years, so that

25 budgetary output, you know what I mean, what did we as

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1 taxpayers pay for the next 15 years, a gym that's not

2 going to be utilized? I don't think that's really a

3 fiscal type thing, and then one other thing that I had

4 mentioned, and I don't see it as a, as a consideration

5 kind of a thing would be it had been brought up at one of

6 the previous school committee meetings by a town
resident

7 or whatever, and I had brought it up at our thing was

8 that, a grantwriter, somebody had made the suggestion
of

9 a grantwriter, you know. It doesn't even have to be a

10 salary position, but it could be something where, you

11 know, a percentage of the grant could be, like be the

12 reimbursement, if you will, for the parent or whoever it

13 is to write the grant. I mean, that might help with some

14 of the toxicology issues and whatever. I don't see that

15 as one of the recommendations, but it could be a
strength

16 or whatever. And then just one other thing, one other

17 quick thing would be the libraries, okay, the local, if

18 you go into Option 3 with the separating of the

19 libraries, you wouldn't have as much diversity for all of

20 the age, different age levels within one grade of

21 readers, you know, in the third grade my son is like big

22 into science, okay, he was reading about comets and
that

23 was his forte, but I don't think if he was in the third

24 grade at one of these divisions, you know, schools in

25 Option 3 that he would be able to get those types of

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1 books, you know what I mean, that's just like a small,

2 you know, whatever, but that's.

3 MS. CLARKE: Thank you. I just wanted to

4 respond to your first concern about the gym.

Cumberland

5 Hill is the other one-story school, and they also have a

6 new space, but I need to just speak to that because many

7 early childhood centers have what they call a gross
motor

8 area, and so a large indoor space, it may not be used for

9 formal physical education classes, but, it, these

10 children at that age do need space to run, and many of

11 them have a need for working on specific skills, and we

12 have all probably seen that as parents, so it won't be a

13 waste of that space. It might not be utilized as you had

14 envisioned it, but both of the schools that would be

15 eligible for early childhood both have that same

16 circumstance, so I just wanted to mention that. In fact,
17 I understand they were built the same year, and they're
18 very similar in design.

19 **MS. ROCK:** The only thing I would say in
20 disagreement to that is that right now they have
21 specialized rooms that they do use for that purpose at
22 Ashton.

23 **MS. CLARKE:** Children who require services.

24 **MS. ROCK:** And so whatever --

25 **MS. CLARKE:** So thank you very much, and I

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1 would also hope regarding, we'll add the grant writing to
2 our list of the possible ways to save, but the libraries,
3 the diversity of readers I would hope that any library,
4 even if it served only two or three grade levels, would
5 have a range to be able to differentiate for the
6 different readers, but they wouldn't have to have, it
7 still would not require the four or five sites, would

8 have all the same exact books to support a new
curriculum

9 change, so there would be a variety of reading levels in
10 any good elementary library.

11 Anybody over here? We are trying to give equal time

12 to the different mics.

13 MS. LOSEA: My name is Chrisine Losea. I'm

14 a parent at Community. I have a concern that I wanted to

15 express about the fact of transition. I feel like this

16 year has been a huge transition for all the elementary

17 schools. There is three new curriculums in place, the

18 PBIS, the new math curriculum, the new reading

19 curriculum, the teachers are struggling to implement it,

20 the parents are struggling to supplement it at home, and

21 the kids are struggling as well. I feel like by the end

22 of the year the teachers are going to have everything in

23 place. If we go forward with this in the next year,

24 you're going to have, for lack of a better term, job

25 bumping, people going to be moving from fifth grade to

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1 third grade, and you have got the same transition all
2 over again. That is a huge concern, I think especially
3 this year, this year has been a very difficult start to
4 the year, and I just wanted to make sure that I express
5 that for your report.

6 MS. CLARKE: Thank you, and we have heard
7 about the changes, and they're listed as academic on the
8 academic notes, but it's one of the things that sometimes

9 people forget is that elementary teachers, and I'm an
10 elementary teacher at first even though I spent 19 years
11 of my career as a principal and that is they teach all
12 subjects, so in a middle or a high school you might have
13 one teacher that's learning a new math curriculum or a
14 new sequencing or scope and sequence as is the case
here,
15 another teacher who teaches language arts and English
or
16 whatever it is called in that particular school district,
17 but at the elementary level the teachers teach all of the
18 subjects and of course PBIS and RTI goes across all
19 curriculum areas, so thank you for your comment.

20 MS. LECOURS: My name is Sonya Lecours. I

21 have two boys at Cumberland Hill, first and third grade.

22 We have done the whole shuffle back and forth to

23 Community on busses with kids, my boys having to
spend up

24 to an hour each way on the bus. I have had trouble with

25 my younger son, because by the time he gets to school
he

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1 doesn't want to learn. He spent an hour and a half, two

2 hours on a bus for half day of kindergarten, and that's

3 just moving one school to another. It's going to be

4 monumental the logistics of picking up the kids, three
5 busses, it just blows my mind how stressful it is going
6 to be on the kids on the bus, monitoring these kids,
7 they're going to be so not ready to learn, and it upsets
8 me to see on here you have got the advantages, less
9 travel times for specialists, and disadvantages the great
10 travel time for students. I don't think the travel time

11 for specialists should be a consideration as an
advantage

12 when you think of how many children are going to be
13 spending extra hours on a bus, and I just wanted to
14 reiterate that it is extremely important that these kids
15 get to school ready to learn, not frustrated.

16 MS. CLARKE: Thank you.

17 **MS. LECOURS:** I also wanted to add, have you
18 looked, had any discussions with the local police on
19 safety issues. I know you mentioned about restricted
20 parking in certain areas, um, I mean, travel lanes going
21 to be blocked, fire lanes going to be blocked, there are
22 going to be parents picking up children because they
23 don't let children on busses for extended periods of
24 time.

25 **MS. CLARKE:** We did indicate that there

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1 would be increased traffic, and we had a concern about
2 that.

3 **MS. LECOURS:** Did you consult the outside,
4 did you consult the local police department and fire
5 department?

6 **MS. CLARKE:** We don't believe we did that in
7 Cumberland, but we have had discussions in other
8 districts, and we have been very helpful. I know there

9 have been already some adjustments made in
Cumberland,

10 but there certainly would have to be, if a decision of

11 this type were made to make a major change, there
would

12 have to be further consultation, absolutely.

13 **MS. LECOURS:** Thank you.

14 **MS. CLARKE:** Thank you. Over here.

15 **MS. CLARK:** Hi, I'm Sue Clark, I have five

16 children, three of which are at Community School, two of

17 which are too young to be at the Community School. I

18 think the greatest concern that I have in coming to this

19 meeting is that I was sort of expecting a little bit of

20 data collection beyond how many students are in a
school,

21 what the capacity is, and how we can save money. What

22 are the average costs that you incur that huge transition

23 of materials, people, transitioning students, by

24 performing maybe welcome student orientations, et
cetera,

alluding 25 what, is there a standard minimum bussing time,

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child 1 to the woman who just spoke that you would want any

2 anywhere to be so that a parent who knows that they're

3 going to be maybe moving their child will know, well, at

4 least they're not going to be on the bus for an hour,

5 there might be a minimum standard. You're the New

6 England School Development Council, what collection of

7 data through all these processes that you have gone

8 throughout the past in other states and districts do you

9 have to support these options, and these
recommendations?

10 I think that the amount of detail on our particular

11 school system is great, but I was hoping for maybe a

12 little backup with your expertise from your prior work

13 with other schools.

14 MR. DONALD KENNEDY: We'll have to have it

15 in the final.

16 MS. CLARKE: He said we'll include more in

17 the final report.

18 MS. CLARK: Okay, I also wanted to mention,

19 this is just a comment, also. Option 3 has quite a few

20 advantages. Professional development seems to be one
of
21 the most commonly mentioned advantage, and while I
22 understand professional development then means the
23 teachers are better prepared to help our students I feel
24 as though perhaps again more, more proof in the
pudding
25 so to speak that this is actually going to help, not only

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1 save money but help the students as well. Thank you.

2 MS. CLARKE: Okay. Thank you for your

3 comments. Are there any other, yes, welcome.

4 **MS. ST. PIERRE:** Holly St. Pierre. I have a

5 first grader at Garvin, two more that will eventually be

6 there. In your elementary program notes one of the

7 things that you mention is the absence of challenge or

8 expenses for advanced elementary learners, and I didn't

9 see that mentioned as maybe a possible advantage in
any

10 one of those options, is that something that's going to

11 be mentioned or talked about?

12 **MS. CLARKE:** Well, that was something that

13 came across in multiple venues, and without further

14 staffing or additional technology or changes to the

15 educational program, I know you have some wonderful

16 teachers, and I'm sure they're doing extensions in their
17 classrooms, but it's not necessarily organized in any
18 district fashion. There might be more options, but there
19 again there might be a cost to that, so if you have more
20 students, pre-K and kindergarten students in one place,
21 you can do different things than if they were scattered,
22 and the same thing would be true if you had students at
23 the same grade level, there might be more options, but

24 that would be something that would have to be a
decision

25 by the district, and quite often staffing is part of

1 that, and that costs money. So I can't promise that it
2 would be something that would happen.

3 MR. DONALD KENNEDY: Did you want to close?

4 MR. HIGGINS: John Higgins, I had asked a
5 question earlier.

6 MS. CLARKE: This will be the last comment.

7 MR. HIGGINS: Someone mentioned the
8 deterioration of the PTO. One thing I have noticed
9 certainly this year and even last year there is a huge
10 educational advantage to the PTO. The PTO has funded
11 some programs that I think she has almost learned more

12 from those programs than she has in the class.

13 MS. CLARKE: It's incredible what the PTO in
14 this community have done.

15 MR. HIGGINS: The after-school programs,
16 bringing the weekly readers, the field trips, without
17 them the educational experience would be a lot worse.

18 MS. CLARKE: We heard it again and again how
19 wonderful the parents are and how generous, not only
with
20 the volunteering, with the fund raising and all kinds
21 of -- I'd ask, well, where did this come from or how did
22 you get this, oh, the parents helped with this. So the
23 parents have been incredible.

24 MR. HIGGINS: That's going to be a lot

25 **harder if there is loss of a sense of community in the**

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1 **schools.**

2 **MS. CLARKE: Please, just I want to point**

3 **out the e-mail and the fax. Anything else that you have,**

4 **please feel free. We'll stand ready for additional**

5 **thoughts and comments that you may have, or those who**

6 **couldn't come tonight, as you said, the full**

7 **presentation, all the slides will be posted on the**

8 **website, so anybody who wasn't here, they won't hear**

what

9 we had to say, they won't hear other explanation and
10 answers to questions, but they'll see the information
11 that was presented on the slides tonight.

12 MR. MUTTER: I do have a couple of requests
13 and they have been mentioned, but is it possible for you
14 to offer an opinion on the difference in the capacities
15 with respect to the Torrado Report, a clear opinion as to
16 why they are just so different?

17 MR. DONALD KENNEDY: We can certainly do
18 that in the final. We can certainly do that in the
19 final. We'll have to take one or two, two or three
20 specific schools and run their numbers and run our

21 numbers and we'll see what the differences are. In every
22 place where we have done that before, I'm thinking of
23 Nashua, New Hampshire, for example, it was entirely a
24 difference in educational program. The architect who
did
25 their numbers accounted for the use of space as they
were

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1 doing it. The way their program was at the time that the
2 architect did it and what we were accounting for was a
3 different educational program because they had added,

4 they brought a number of students back from outside
5 placements and special education, and they had a lot of
6 programs in the district for autism and things like that
7 they had not had when the architect had done the earlier
8 study and that was the difference.

9 MR. MUTTER: I just wanted to make sure that
10 you did offer an opinion as to why they were different.

11 Is there any value in offering an option using the COC as
12 opposed to your educational component? What would
an
13 option look like if we kept those?

14 MR. DONALD KENNEDY: We can look at that.

15 MR. MUTTER: What option could be available
16 that could be used with COC?

17 MR. DONALD KENNEDY: Yeah, we can do that.

18 MS. CLARKE: Thank you.

19 MR. MUTTER: And the other thing would be

20 what's the time frame that, are we working on for

21 proceeding?

22 MR. DONALD KENNEDY: Less than a month.

23 MS. CLARKE: Less than a month is the answer

24 to that question.

25 MR. DONALD KENNEDY: And typically people

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1 who have been to meetings like this usually take another
2 two or three weeks to get additional information into us,
3 so we don't want to cut off people if they do have
4 something else that they want to say.

5 **MS. BEAULIEU:** Okay. I just wanted to
6 confirm, you stated that regardless of how we lay out the
7 landscape of the schools, we could not, based on
8 enrollment, accommodate for a full-day kindergarten. Did
9 I misunderstand that?

10 **MS. CLARKE:** If they were all at one site
11 and some of the space was reconfigured so that, you
know,
12 there was room for all of the support staff and the

13 special programs that might be at that site, if you take
14 an elementary school, and there is, you know, spaces
that
15 won't be needed for a pre-K and kindergarten,
sometimes
16 there can be a reconfiguration, or if there are no
17 clusters of special needs programming other than what
is
18 integrated into the program, a lot of early childhood
19 programs don't have separate programs, they integrate
the
20 children into the regular classroom as much as possible,
21 and don't need a full classroom, there might be some
22 possibilities there, but I will take a deeper look at the
23 two one-level schools and see what I can come up with.

24 MS. BEAULIEU: I have a few other quick

25 questions. Do you see school districts having dedicated

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1 science and math rooms or classrooms in their
elementary

2 school makeups?

3 MS. CLARKE: There are more districts that

4 we're seeing that in. Some of them are districts where

5 they've had a decline in enrollment, and they haven't, it

6 is not enough to close a school, but they are able to set

7 aside a room, and quite often they also have a science

8 specialist go along with that program that it does some
9 of the setup, because that hands-on experience is so
10 important, it is starting earlier and earlier but

11 especially at this upper elementary level there is a lot

12 more hands-on investigation in a more scientific way
than

13 they used to.

14 MS. BEAULIEU: You could see an advantage

15 for that clearly for students, but an advantage for

16 faculty as well in the sharing of resources, and

17 potentially we hear often about having common planning

18 time, and we're struggling to make that happen in our

19 allotted time map.

20 **MS. CLARKE:** Right, but the science rooms
21 are also valuable in the sense that it has the resources
22 you need for the science program, it can be set up, it's
23 very difficult as an elementary classroom teacher to be
24 trying to set up some kind of hands-on experience if you
25 don't have a, you know, a break in your schedule or you

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1 don't have recess duty that day because, or whatever,
2 because the kids, they get totally enthralled with what
3 you're doing, and, you know, they can't concentrate if

4 you're setting up something really exciting in the
5 science room. They want to get on with it.

6 MS. BEAULIEU: Understood. And with regard
7 to, it was broached a little bit about high-end learners,
8 what are you seeing for classrooms that can allow for
9 flexibility? I know we have moved many of our
10 specialized programs into various schools for somewhat
of
11 an economy of scale, and it is targeted to have students
12 have more engagement with a regular classroom, but
with
13 students that are considered a high-end learner what
14 typically do you see or would you like to see, something
15 like that, whether it is a dedicated classroom that gets

16 used that fluctuates in its use throughout the day or if
17 there are other common practices.

18 MS. CLARKE: We see a lot of different
19 programming. Quite often there is some clustering of
20 students so that if you have five classrooms you don't

21 have, just like you might cluster some of your
elementary

22 students, might cluster a few students that need special
23 help in a particular area, you cluster a few students
24 that could really spark one another and do some

25 interesting work within the classroom, and the
classroom

1 teacher will be responsible for further differentiating
2 the instruction to meet the needs of that cluster of
3 students, and in some districts, especially in
4 Connecticut where they still have a law on the books
5 requiring meeting the needs of their gifted students,
6 there will be a staff member, there may not be, they may
7 go from building to building but they actually consult
8 with teachers and sometimes they do special challenge
9 projects with interested students, and so there are
10 multiple models out there, but it has to be defined it
11 doesn't just happen.

12 MS. BEAULIEU: And then lastly, I think it
13 would be helpful for some of the information that gets
14 returned to us to see how the landscape of our schools
15 are presently used and certainly in the elementary
16 schools we know there is kids partitioned into each
17 class, but also from the perspective of how we're using
18 specialized programs in those different schools, so if
19 you have a school where there are children being
served
20 specifically for autism. I know throughout the budget
21 process we have engaged and discussed that, but it's
22 changed pretty significantly even over the four-year
23 period when we originally started this conversation.

24 MS. CLARKE: We had talked about the

25 facility profile that will be included in the final,

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1 there will be a sheet that has a breakdown of each of the

2 spaces that aren't used. It will say how many regular

3 classroom spaces there are, but if there are a couple of

4 special-needs program rooms, regular classrooms, it'll

**5 say under the comments what particular program is
being**

6 met on that sheet, so you will able to see that in black

7 and white as I say.

8 MS. BEAULIEU: Thank you.

9 MR. MUTTER: Are we still on, okay, I'd like

10 to thank everyone for attending this evening and their

11 decorum during the discussion. I will thank the

12 administration for helping coordinate the forum, and I

13 guess we are going to wait within 30 days for the final

14 report. Thank you very much.

15 MS. CLARKE: Thank you all very much. Have

16 a nice night.

17 (HEARING CLOSED AT 9:31 P.M.)

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C E R T I F I C A T E

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I, Tracy L. Shepherd, do hereby certify
that the foregoing is a true, accurate, and complete
transcript of my notes taken at the above-entitled
hearing.

8

9

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I hereunto set my hand
this 30th day of November 2010.

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14

TRACY SHEPHERD, CSR, NOTARY PUBLIC
MY COMMISSION EXPIRES 12/31/10

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DATE: October 26, 2010

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IN RE: Public Hearing

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HEARING OF: Cumberland School Committee

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